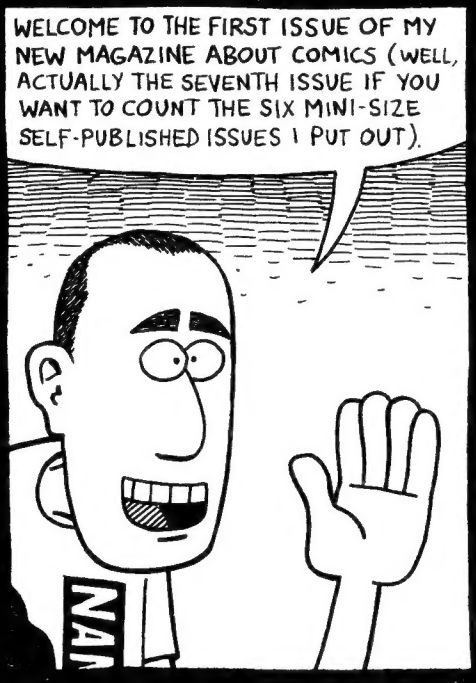
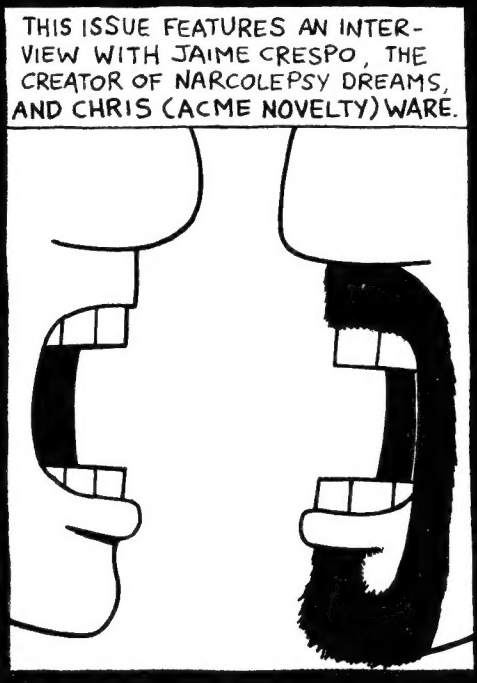
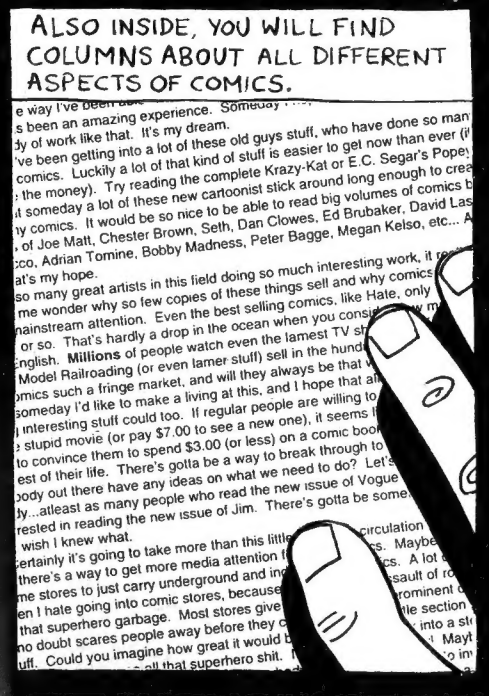
DESTROY ALL COMICS

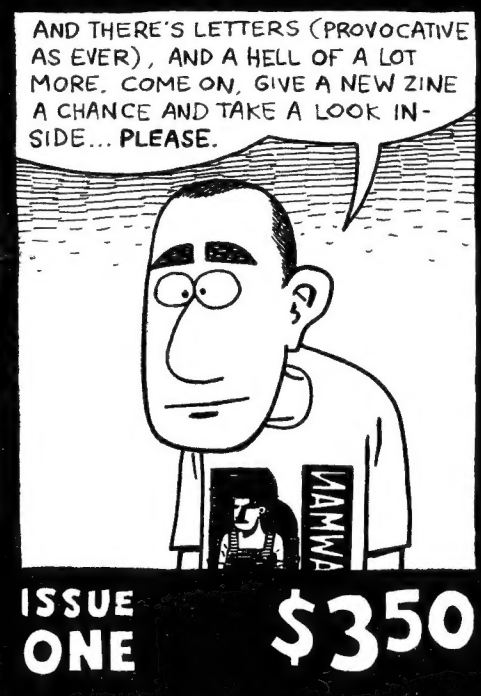

WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF MY NEW MAGAZINE ABOUT COMICS (WELL, ACTUALLY THE SEVENTH ISSUE IF YOU WANT TO COUNT THE SIX MINI-SIZE SELF-PUBLISHED ISSUES I PUT OUT).



THERE'S LOTS OF REVIEWS OF ALL THE BEST MINI-COMICS COMING OUT TODAY, AND EVEN REVIEWS OF REGULAR COMICS TOO.
BOX #1
HATE
Pickle



PLUS, THERE'S NEW COMICS BY JEFF LEVINE (THAT'S ME), DYLAN WILLIAMS, KEITH KNIGHT, JAMES KOCHALKA, BRIAN MARSLAND, ERIC SEARLEMAN AND MORE.


AND THERE'S LETTERS (PROVOCATIVE AS EVER), AND A HELL OF A LOT MORE. COME ON, GIVE A NEW ZINE A CHANCE AND TAKE A LOOK INSIDE... PLEASE.

ISSUE ONE **$3.50**

INTRODUCTION by Jeff LeVine

Hi. I've got something I want to let you know right now. I love comics. Yes, it's true...I LOVE COMICS, and I'm really not ashamed to admit it.

I first really got into comics in 1984 when my friend Chris got me hooked on a lot of wacky stuff Marvel was doing at the time that was for people around our age (14). Real crap like the X-Men, G.I. Joe and the Secret Wars. But it was fun crap, and at the time we really thought it was the greatest and couldn't realize why so few other people were seeing the magic there that we did.

It wasn't long before I was collecting ten or more titles a month and going down to the comic book store at least once a week. I even went to a convention or two. I don't know, it was a pretty exciting time. I decided I wanted to be a comic book artist and started spending all my free time drawing miserable imitations of all my favorite comics. Fuck it though, it was fun...one of the only things I actually liked doing, and I was convinced that if I just kept at it long enough, that someday I would succeed.

Then Dark Knight and Watchmen came out and really knocked my socks off. In the process though, they managed to make most other comics look dull and just plain stupid in comparison.

Luckily, somewhere around there I managed to come across comics that started to speak to me about my life a lot more directly (in particular, Love and Rockets) that made all the superhero comics I had collected seem even more stupid. By the time I was 17 or 18, I was more than ready to give up comics and get on with my life. I sold practically all my comics to a friend, and thought that was the end.

Strangely though, it wasn't. Comics like Love and Rockets and Weirdo kept me coming back to the stores, even if it wasn't as often. I was still working at drawing comics too. It was around that time that I first started sending out samples of my art to all the major companies and started collecting rejection slips.

Suddenly it was the 90s. I found myself barely employed and living in San Jose. And suddenly there were quite a few new comics that were really great and seemed to be really speaking to me. Comics like Hate, Eightball and Dirty Plotte renewed my waning interest in comics and inspired me to start doing more personal comics.

In the middle of 1992, all my years of hard work paid off and I got my own comic book, published by Slave Labor Graphics, called No Hope. You may, or may not have seen it, but there have been been six issues out so far and it's one of the most important things in my life. Anyway, when the first issue came out in the spring of 1993, I learned that having a comic, and making a living off comics are two very differnet things. It's a lot of hard work for very little financial reward. You may call me crazy, but to me it's worth it.

Anyway, in the spring of 1993 I knew for sure that I was in for the long haul. It was going to be a life of comics for me. At the same time, I also moved to San Francisco and became aware of a whole exciting world of small press comics that seemed to be going by practically unnoticed. Looking around at the comic book industry I realized there was a serious need for a magazine to cover the kind of comics I liked and to do it in a straight forward and interesting way. Since nobody else seemed to be doing it, I decided to do it myself.

So I sat down and started writing my opinions about some of the comics coming out that I liked. I even got Dennis Worden and Dennis Eichhorn to write short columns. Finally, I drew a five page comic, then took it all down to the photocopy shop, and thus was born the first digest size issue of Destroy All Comics.

One year later I'd already released six issues of DAC myself and it had really gotten bigger than I could deal with. I couldn't afford to make print runs as big as I needed and didn't have enough time or money to send out copies.

It was at the Wondercon convention in Oakland this year when I was complaining about not being able to afford to put out Destroy All Comics anymore, that Slave Labor publisher (and my friend) Dan Vado renewed an offer to take over the publication of this magazine. I think I suprised him by saying yes.

One handshake, and six months later, here we are at the first full size issue, and damn, it feels good.

Odds are you've probably never seen a magazine quite like this before. This is a magazine about comics. It's about the comics that I like, and it's from my perspective as a comic book artist. Obviously you won't agree with everything I say. My point isn't to get you to agree, but to get you to think, and maybe to get you to look at something new.

This magazine isn't going to have all the latest news and gossip about the comics industry. Odds are that you won't find any of the space in here to talk about any of the comics done by big money publishers (like Marvel of DC), because I don't think any are really doing anything worth talking about these days, and anyway, there are already plenty of other magazines about all that crap.

You won't find boring interviews with people in here just

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Printed in Canada

because they'll sell more copies. I'll only interview people who I think actually have something worthwhile to say, and are making comics I like. For instance I've interviewed Jaime Crespo in this issue. Maybe you've never heard of him before, but I think you should have. He's been making great comics for years, and is one of the more interesting people making comics today. I'm also fortunate enough to be able to print an interview that my friend Dylan Williams did with Chris Ware. His series, Acme Novelty Library (from Fantagraphics) has set a new high mark for production values in alternative comics, not to mention excellence in art.

I'm also lucky enough to be able to print a whole bunch of new comics this issue (more than twice the amount I ever ran in DAC's mini-comic days). Thanks go to all the people who contributed comics. Most of them have their own comics or mini-comics and you can find out more about them at the right...in the contributor notes.

I write all the reviews in here, and I try to only review stuff I think is worth it, and I mostly try to review things I actually liked, as it seems fairly stupid to waste space complaining about how much shit is out there, when I could actually be talking about the good stuff. Sometimes I can't help myself though. I come across a lot of mini-comics and I make a special effort to review them in here, as there aren't many other places to find out about all the good stuff that is out there, that you usually can't find in your local store. Unlike some other magazines, I run pictures of the mini-comics I review too, so you can get a better idea of what to expect if you chose to send away for one.

I guess that's about it. I hope you enjoy this. It's been a lot more work than I thought it would be, as there's twice as much stuff in here as there ever was when this was a mini thing that I was putting together with the help of a photocopier and my spare time. There's probably a few kinks I still have to work out, and I really plan on trying to make each issue a little bit better. I'm apologizing in advance for spelling errors that slip through (unlike other magazines with staffs and editors and all that, this is all just little old me sitting infront of the computer typing this all in). Special thanks to Lisa Maslowe for catching all the errors she could (among other things).

Extra special thanks to Dan Vado, Craig Pape and the rest of the Slave Labor gang, without whom this magazine wouldn't exist.

It's a damn tough marketplace out there, and all of a sudden there are a lot of other magazines about comics out there too. I think this one's a little bit different, and more than a little bit better. If you do too, speak up about it, because that is the only way this is going to survive. Get your stores to order it! Let people know...change is in the air. Things can only get more interesting from here.

Thanks for everything, everybody,
Jef LeVine October 21, 1994
Write me at: 1574 Hayes St, San Francisco, CA 94117

DESTROY ALL COMICS #1 FEATURING:

my introduction
an interview with Jaime Crespo
an interview with Chris Ware
columns: Comics! Comics! Comics! by me and Kirby Vs. Picasso by James Kochalka
comic book reviews
mini-comic reviews
comics by: Eric Searleman, me, Dylan Williams, James Kochalka, Brian Marsland, Keith Knight, and the Homo Test written by Ed Brubaker and Jon Lewis, with art by Sam Henderson
and letters too!

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Contributor Notes:

Dylan Williams is a damn great guy. His own comic, Horse is soon to be published by Aeon, and he also has a new series called Crime Clinic to be published this April by Slave Labor. One of the founding members of Puppy Toss, you can get many of his self-published mini-comics by writting P.O. Box 9849, Berkeley, CA 94709.

James Kochalka can't decide whether he's a cartoonist, a painter, or a songwriter. The differences between the three become less apparent to him all the time. Also he likes to laugh real loud. You can get a sample of his comic book James Kochalka Superstar by sending $2.00 to him at P.O. Box 8321, Burlington, VT 05402

Eric Searleman wrote a very funny description for this space, but I managed to lose it. His new comic, Jazzbo, is out from Slave Labor right now, and he also has new comics in The Hanging Tree.

Keith Knight is a multi-media artist whose self-syndicated strip, The K Chronicles mini-comic is available for $1.50 and a 29¢ stamp to: P.O. Box 591794, San Francisco, CA 94159-1794

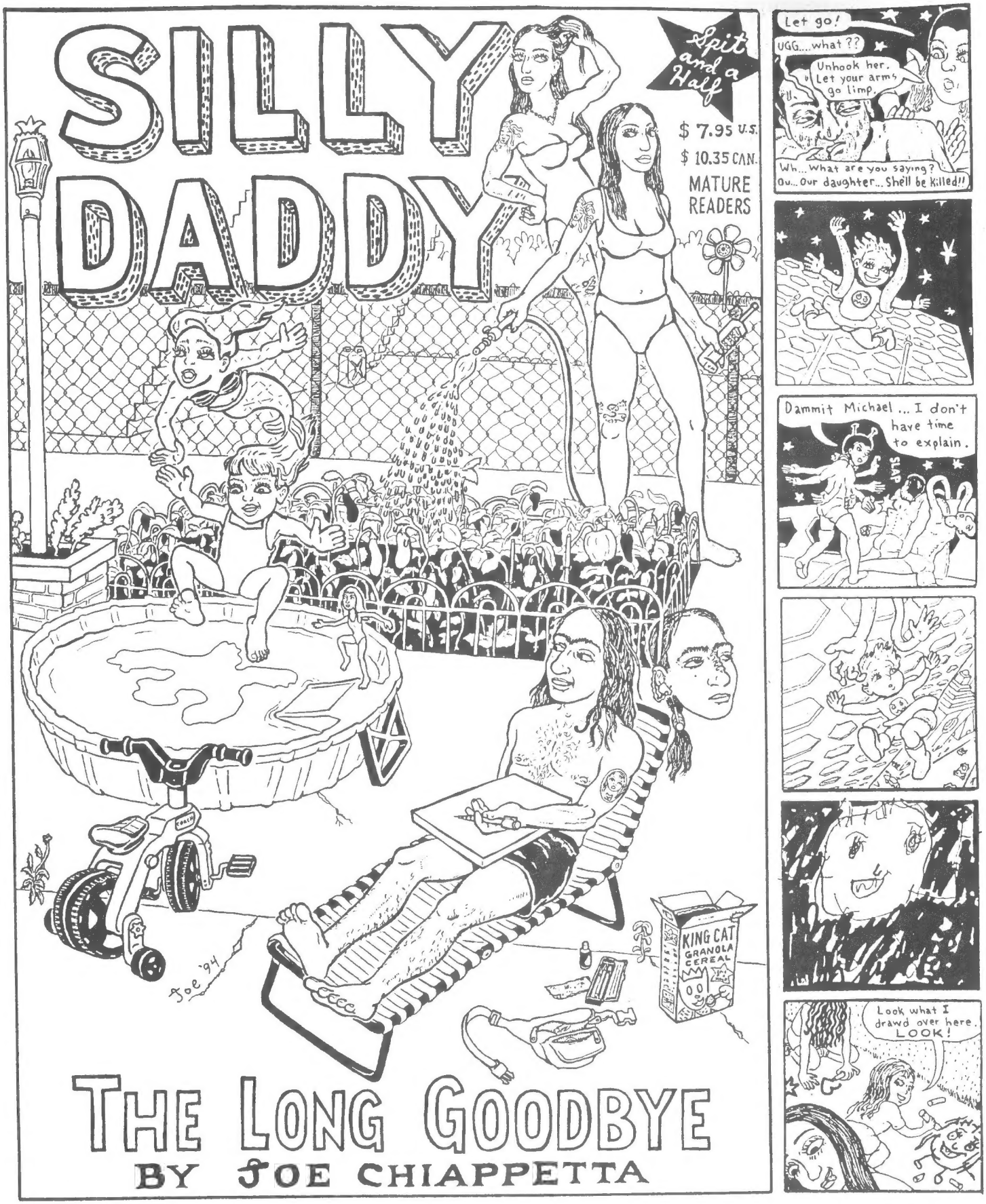
Brian Marsland lives in Tempe, AZ, where he works at an art production company making paintings for galleries, interior designers, and furniture outlets like Ethan Allen. He makes mini-comics in print-runs of about 600 or so, and distributes them locally and through the mail. He also does album covers (for bands like Polvo and the Wipers), flyers and loads of paintings. There's a new issue of his comic every month or so, but they aren't numbered so it gets confusing. Send $2.00 for a bunch of new stuff to 701 S. Roosevelt #108, Tempe, AZ 85281

Ed Brubaker is the creator of the popular comic-book series Lowlife, published by Aeon, as well as a really nice guy. He lives where all the cool cartoonists live, up in Seattle.

Jon Lewis is the creator of the Xeric Award winning True Swamp, now published by Slave Labor. Yeah, he lives in Seattle too.

Sam Henderson is the creator of the hilarious mini-comic the Magic Whistle (among other things). You should order everything he has ever done. This is not a joke. Send $2.00 for each issue of the Magic Whistle that you want (there are five already), and send $4.00 for a grab bag of his mini's that include The Night of 100 Assholes, Dubious Future Funnies, the "F" Hat, Calvacade O' Drollery, and Sam Henderson Texas Ranger. Write Sam at 14 Bayard St. #3, Brooklyn, NY 11211

Jeff LeVine is exhausted.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an interview with JAIME CRESPO

by Jeff LeVine in September 1994.

Besides being a really interesting person, Jaime Crespo makes one of my favorite mini-comics...Narcolepsy Dreams...soon to be a full-size comic from Slave Labor. If you haven't seen Jaime's comics before, this should be a good introduction, and hopefully, his stuff will be easier to find from now on.

Tell me a little bit about your past and how you ended up being the person you are today?

Short and lucky. How's that?

Where were you born?

In California.

What part?

I could say the asshole, but there's many of them. I'm originally from Sacramento. I was raised in Sacramento, and I moved here to San Francisco in the early eighties. I can't be exact if it was 82 or 83. I always get confused, because I was visiting here a lot between that point, before I officially moved in. How did I end up where I am now? Fuck, I don't know. How many tapes do you got? That's a good question. I guess it started with Deadbeat magazine in the mid-eighties, on the Haight, which was a newspaper, a periodical that came out once a month. I'm still really good friends with Frank of Deadbeat magazine, and he started publishing me there. I mean, I got published in school papers, and my best friend always teases me that the first thing I ever got published was on the side of a boxcar, cause we used to live near the railroad tracks, I used to do all these little cartoon characters with chalk and rocks and stuff. Fifty box cars, you know. In a round about way that's it. Are we done?

What year were you born? How old are you?

Oh fuck. I was born somewhere between the Eisenhower and Kennedy administration. Hows that sound? To a truck driver and a beautician. I'm the youngest of five, and we're all still alive, amazingly. Except for my dad.

Did you read comics when you were a kid?

Yeah, I did. Actually, I had a whole stack of Sad Sack comic books. I don't know if anybody remembers who he is. I inherited them from some neighbor of ours. I think this was in East L.A.

HE WAS UNSHAVEN WITH A CIGARETTE HANGING OUT OF HIS MOUTH. HE WORE A WRINKLED MAROON SPORT COAT WITH THE "DIDEAN" LOGO ON IT.
I GOTTA GET ME A BETTER GIG!

Some guy went into the Army or something. He gave all his ECs to his brother and I got, I'm not kidding, like fifty Sad Sacks, so I was like okay. I mean, I was like eight. And when I was ten, I was in San Diego and I went into some surf shop with a neighbor kid, he was like a surfer dude, and we go in and I see a surfer magazine and I picked it up and started flipping through it. It had a three page thing that Rick Griffin did in black and white and it was so cool. I bought the magazine, and I still have it. It's from1970 or something like that, and it just set me off. I was like, wow, you mean there's more than guys in pajamas and little talking animals? This is the whole hippy thing. Gilbert Shelton's Freak Brothers , I'd seen it around in hippy papers and stuff. He's really cool, because he stepped out of that format. I mean, he used the old format, but more contemporary with people you almost know, bizarrely enough, and it struck me funny.

As you got older, what led you into doing comics yourself?

Probably to just tell a story with pictures and words. I guess maybe I'm a frustrated writer. I read a lot when I was a kid. My buddy, who I grew up with and teased me about the boxcars, he's like eleven years old and he's already read Ulysses and the Octopus, and things like that. I'm not kidding...this guy was into it. His family were these anglo-hippy-dippy -beat people who lived in our neighborhood. You'd go over to their house and they'd have public TV going and classical on the radio, and mom's reading Tolstoy and dad's reading the stock report...the rest of the neighborhood is working on their cars. So, it was more of an extension of writting. It just so happens I can draw a little bit, so I kinda put the two together...and this is before I ever knew of Harvey Pekar, who was quite an influence.

Tell me about some of the different comics you've done.

Probably just about what everybody else has done. I did strips that were really bad. I did one panelers that were really bad. Everything was pretty bad until I got into doing books.

When was that?

I started doing a book in 1981. With Francis Kohler, the co-editor of X-Ray, up in Sacramento when we were living there. I never really finished it. He was the one to do all the work. I'd kinda start, then, let's go drink beer. He ended up publishing stuff. We were going to go to a xerox place and print up 30 of them and try to sell them for thirty-five cents or something. Not even folded, like 8 1/2" X 11", stapled together. Then, I lost interest for years. I didn't draw from 81 till 85...nothing at all.

What were you doing?

From what I can rememeber. After the early part of the eighties I was in trouble a lot, and after that I moved to San Francisco and I was just drinking. Playing music and drinking. Living, and did I mention drinking. Lots of drinking. I used to have quite a problem with alcohol...when I couldn't get it (laughs). That was my problem. I had a writer friend who was throwing out stories to all these different little periodicals. He said they were looking for cartoonists, so I did all these really bad, Gary Larsonesque type things. I don't even want to think about them. So, he came

and I made a bunch of xeroxes of all my comics. He took a couple of other comics that I did with no intention of anybody seeing. All these little wordless panels, stream of consciousness, that I really rendered well, that I tried to make a little less comicy. He stole some of those and took them to the guy along with the Gary Larson type stuff. Of course, the guy (that's Frank), looked at the Larsony stuff and just about vomitted, but as he was getting ready to hand them all back, he goes, what are these three at the bottom? These are great! I'll publish these. My friend came back and said he's going to do your comics, and I'm like, yeah, I knew I was witty. And he goes, no not those, those were shit, they're not even worth wiping your ass with, but he said the other ones were good. That's what got me on the bugs. Then I'd sit up late at night with my girlfriend, Excelsior, drinking Jack Daniels and ginger ale, whipping out all these Bukowskiesque stories with comics. Which, unfortunately, a lot of them are lost. Until I got married, I had the bad habit, of giving stuff away, or just throwing it out. Everything. It's done, it's been used, okay.

Was a lot of that stuff published?

Yeah.

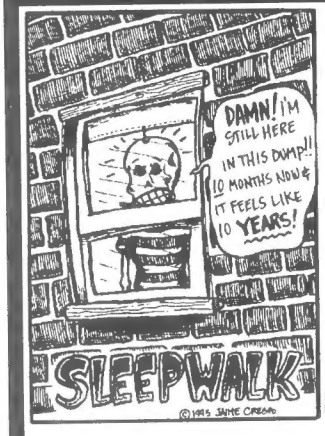
In what places?

Like Deadbeat magazine. Beef. Mind you, these were all around from 85 to 86...maybe 87. This one magazine in Sacramento whose name I can't remember, and some little peashooter paper in the LA area somewhere...through a friend. That one lasted three issues, and that was it. Then I kinda layed off for a while. Then I had stuff in the Rooster and the Raven, in the East Bay, in the later 80s. Some of the leftovers of that stuff.

Then you started doing your own books, yourself?

Uh-huh.

What led you into that?

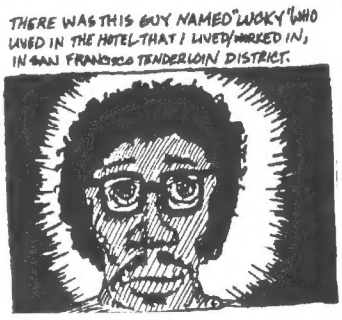


In the late 80s I started getting into the self publishing aspect. I started seeing a few things around the comic book stores. I got tired of going in and finding regular comics that weren't that good. That were really overpriced. I remember Weirdo was really hot then, and I thought wouldn't it be great to do your own little Weirdo, an anthology magazine, but for a really cheap price, like a dollar. So ended up doing this comic called La Casa Loca, and I put out four of them. I put people like Mack White, George Parsons, Keith Knight, Eric Koller, myself, Bruce Hilvitz...and they sold as most anthologies do, piss poor to bad. But it got me interested, and I saw Mack White was doing his own little contained stories in some of his early Metacomics, so I started doing some.

And the first one of those...

The first one, Johnny Brewton published, and it was called Hmm? It was an 8 1/2" X 11" piece of paper with comics on both sides and you could cut and fold it down into one little comic about 2" X 2", and put it into a little plastic bag, and put a little toy in there. Those sold pretty good. We sold them for 50¢ or something, and I remember he sent me fifty or something and I offed them in a day. It was incredible. Then, going back, we took those little stream of consciousness comics, called El Brujo. We took a bunch of those and just put a panel per page. We made three issues of El Brujo, but I think only one or two ever got published. The third one never saw the light of day. Those are lost too. I've lost master art to just about everything. I'm always telling people, don't write for back issues, because I'm trying to find back issues.

Next came...



Tales From the Edge of Hell. Once again I was trying to make a stab at strips. I wanted to do something different. I used to live in this hotel in the Tenderloin. I was a janitor there, and I was drinking (what a suprise), and since there were over two hundred people in the hotel, I met different people all the time, and it was a really transitory thing. I kinda kept a journal, so after I moved out I decided to do all the strips. I put it in the formula of six panels, and just covered one person per story. They're true stories, I just changed the names. Later, on a few of them, I thought back and I'd left some things out. There's some seriously weird people down there. I must of wrote about seventy plus, I drew forty-some of them, of which I'd say ten or fifteen are lost, and I sent them to just about every alternative paper in the country. I must have sent out well over fifty packages, and they all got turned down. Every single one. I even sent to Jay Kennedy at King Features, telling him, I don't want this to be in regular papers, because I know they won't take it, but how about alternative papers...are you guys connected with a Bay Guardian, Village Voice type thing? He sent me back a form letter, rejection letter, and then he put in computer laser writting underneath, that "I really like your stuff, but unfortunately, the size format doesn't fit what we're looking for, they have no punchlines, and they deal with subject matter that the media is basically trying to avoid." So I go, augh, reality's out. Okay, so that's how that went down. Since they were just laying around, a couple of summers when I moved over to Marin County, I just decided to put together a book. I tell people I picked the best ones, but technically, they're only half the best ones, because I lost some of the best ones. So, I just picked whatever I had out of a pile and drew a cover really quick, like in an evening, and then printed them up, and thought they wouldn't go anywhere...and man, people are still asking for it. I only have the first ten, which are mine.

It's a great book...it's really unique...they're really good stories.

Thanks. Actually I'd like to rewrite them all, just for grammar. Punctuation. They look a little funky to me right now.

How do you feel about those times, when you were living in that hotel? What are some of the other stuff that was going on then? It seems like a pretty interesting time, if not the happiest.

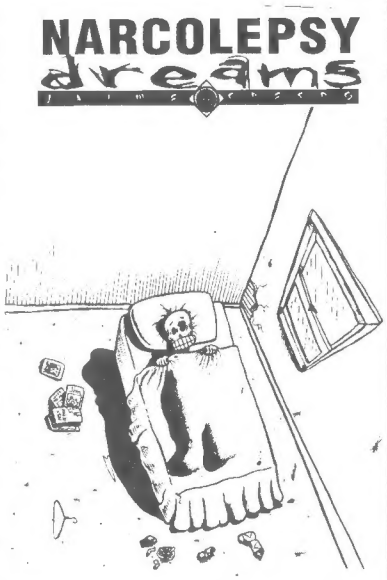
Yeah, it was interesting, to say the least. It wasn't the happiest. I knew it was really bad, when I was leaning out the window (I lived on the top floor), smoking again (I used to smoke a lot), and I was

on my second pack that night, drunk out of my mind, by like eight beers and a flat of Tequila. I was listening to Coltrane, leaning out the window, going, yeah, I'm Mr. Beat, and I'm thinking, what do I mean, I'm Mr. Beat...I'm beat, period. I mean, here I am...a janitor in a Tenderloin hotel, and instead of having TV, I'm watching all the violence in the street (laughs). This sucks, I gotta do something better...at least make more money, so I can buy better stuff to drink. I don't know. A lot of it's a blur. I was hanging out at the art institute a lot in those days too.

Were you taking classes there?

Nah. My days off were in the middle of the week. My best friend was going there, so I'd roll up the street, up the hill there, to the San Francisco Art Institute. Free parties and food, you know. Look at all the art. The best time to show up was during finals week. Get a heat on, get a few beers going, and go in and watch the performance art class! I'd never seen funnier shit in my life! The thing that kills you is these kids are serious. Some of them. A guy walking around with a big jar, with a little G.I. Joe in it, and a little sign on him saying "The People," and the guy is walking around with a suit with a sign hanging around his neck saying, "The Government," and he's cracking open beers and swilling them down and throwing the cans down, and there's music playing, and he drinks like seven beers. You can tell he's getting really drunk, and all of a sudden he unzips his pants and pees in the bottle. And yeah (clapping). Oh, Mr. Political. I'm the only one laughing and they ask me to leave and shit. I'm like wait, this is better than a comedy club. I guess there were some funny times from that point. It was pretty good, I guess.

When did you get Narcolepsy Dreams going?



That was a couple years later. That's when I met my wife. The first one was totally an experiment. The whole book was done within a week, because I wanted to see how fast I could do it. Everything is like hand lettered, and just slapped together, just to see if I could do it. Then I put it out. I hate everything I've ever done, but when I look at that one I really hate it. It made me think I should slow down a little bit, but of course I really didn't. Maybe I slowed down a little more. Maybe books started taking me three weeks to do, or something. Until the fourth one, which took me three or four months. Just cause of time, and something Adrian Tomine said about how it always angered him that people would just rush things out, I think he might have said it in an interview with you too, and I remember him telling me that, almost kind of directing it towards me, you know just rush it out, it's just xerox, what do I care...it's just a stupid zine. It made me realize that that isn't the way to go about things. I took it a little more serious after a while.

What are you doing now?

I'm going to school full-time. Sociology major, trying to get into

Berkeley. I'm still doing Narcolepsy Dreams, but as you know, Slave Labor Graphics has now picked it up. I like Dan and Craig, but when they wanted to do my book, I really kind of questioned their mental stability, but I'll go with it anyway. The first issue is going to be out in February of 95, and it's going to be a full-size comic. It'll be longer than the old one, and it's going to be all new stuff, except for the one story, they wanted me to run Sleepwalk again. I didn't want to run it, but they made the point that not everybody has seen this.

Sleepwalk is the story...

The long story with the janitor, and it's me.

Is that also based on when you were working in the Tenderloin?

Yeah. It's an actual incident.

Why did you choose to draw the main character as a skeleton?

Oh, that's a funny, long-ass, kinda stupid story. It just basically bust down to, maybe it's something from the calledera. The Mexican tradition of the Dia los Muertos, the Day of the Dead, the skeletons and stuff. I've always had an affinity for that. I've always liked the fact that you or I or anybody, that we're basically just bones, with skin and muscle wrapped around, holding organs. But if you took all the organs and everything away, you couldn't point at things and say, oh that black guy, oh that asian woman, oh that gay guy. You know what I mean? Everybody would just be a bag of bones standing around. I guess it's like Spiegelman said, it's just something that can be shed easily. The masks, the bag over the head, and the skeleton...and everybody always asks me, why is the manager the only skin-type actual person? I put him as a heavy-set rastafari-guy, because the actual manager at that time, was not a short, squat, fat black man, he was actually a tall, thin, balding, waspy, white guy. It's just an inside joke, cause he had no soul whatsoever. He had no funk to his walk. He was just a squeaky clean, nerdy guy. That was an inside joke for me, to make him cool.

I've noticed in the last few months, that it seems like a lot of people who have been involved with putting out their own mini-comics and stuff, have switched over to having somebody else publishing their stuff (as you said, yourself included). I was wondering what you think about that, and why you decided to make the switch?

I don't know. That's a good question too. Why did I decide to make the switch? Actually I wanted to go one more issue before I switched, but I wasn't sure there was going to be another issue because of money and time constraints. Where if I can just draw something and then send it to somebody, with some basic directions, and they can do it for me...it's going to reach a bigger audience...it's going to look better (the production), you know, why not. But, I am going to miss the self-publishing, I feel half sad about it. I could either do one or the other, but I don't have time to do both.

What kind of process do you go through to create your comics?

I keep little weird pieces of journal, I write tons of stuff down on paper, and now I'm starting to compile it all on computer. At any given time, I have ten to fifteen scripts stacked on my drawing table on the upper right hand corner. When it comes time to draw stuff, I'll pull them all out, and see which one catches my eye. Sometimes I rewrite it, just so it flows better. I've been getting better at it. I took a couple of English classes, and let me tell you, it helped me and my writing style incredibly. Now I can do two syllable words sometimes. I'll be standing in the shower and the image comes to my head, the story. Like I'll be thinking of the story driving in the car, or sitting in class. I should be thinking about DNA analysis, but I'm thinking about, you know if that wino turns into a superhero (laughs). Then I go home and sketch it out. I use a blue line pencil. Everybody else uses regular pencil, but I used to work for a design firm for a while, and we always used that blue pencil, and I got kind of used to it. Then I just get the ink and attack. I mainly use a brush. I use whatever's around.

When you look at your art, how does it make you feel?

All of it makes me feel like shit (laughs).

I like Riding The Blinds (from Narcolepsy Dreams #4) a lot...

Thanks. That was rejected by Pulse Magazine (laughs). I guess my comic books basically contain a lot of rejected material from the mass media. It's a collection of rejection. I used to get really offended when I'd get rejected. Now I'm trying to see how many rejection slips I can collect. It's like an obsession now.

What comics interest, or influence you now?

I'm rarely influenced by comics. I try to keep that separate. There's certain people out there right now, that you can tell by looking at their work, exactly what they're doing. I hate to say it, I'm honestly not reading a lot of comics. After we're done with this interview, I'm going to go down and buy probably the last two years of comics I haven't bought.

What kind of plans do you have for the future?

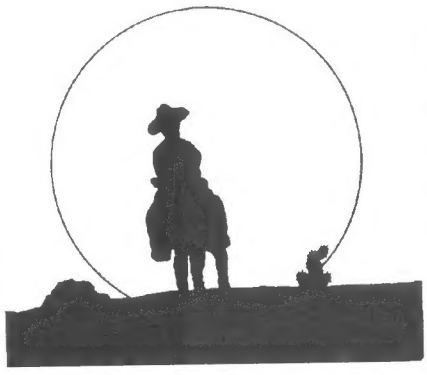
Starting in October I'm going to be teaching this class in the Prisida Community Center in the Outer Mission. I'm going to be teaching mostly gang-banger kids how to put together a comic and do our own anthology. I'm going to school to be a teacher, in social science, but I also want to do counselling. And I'll be doing comics. I could see myself doing comics forever, probably, I have my doubts. I was going to quit (just for two years), and everybody's like, you were going to stop! No, it's a hiatus. I just started school, and I realized what a bad student I was, and I needed every edge I could get just to pass. So I figured, if I quit comics for a while (which would be hard), that's one less thing I could worry about. But thanks to Adrian Tomine, Mack White, George Parson and a couple of other people discouraged me. Adrian was saying, you're just starting to roll now. George was the most threatening one though. He basically said, we're going to fight. So I see myself doing them for years to come. Like it or not. If I end having, which happened to Colin Upton's Big Thing...I think he's great. He's an excellent cartoonist, and I know Fantagraphics dropped him for whatever short-sighted reason, and then he was back to doing his little self-publishing thing. I talked to him about it, and I was pissed, but it didn't stop him. I could see Dan snapping out of his stupor and looking at my stuff going, what the fuck am I doing! And I'll go back to self-publishing...they'll just come out a lot slower, and smaller (laughs).

Does having a family affect drawing comics and the kind of stories you want to tell?

The next issue has the closest I'm getting to a family story. It doesn't help drawing, because being a Dad, I'm the primary caregiver. I'm around the house more than my wife is, so that means I'm around my kid more. I'm drawing, and he wants to hang out sometimes and he wants to draw or play on the computer, and stuff. If you've ever been around a 3 1/2 year old for any length of time, you know there's a lot of attention they need. Dad what's this? Dad what's that? Dad, can you get this for me? They're vertically challenged, so you gotta go and get things for them. So it's made it really tough. It's pushed me back into the late night drawing thing, which I wasn't doing for a while. I was just drawing in the day, like a job. But the support's nice. My wife is very supportive, she makes sure I don't quit doing it, or else she'll leave me. Lots of threats. And she pushes it a lot too. She promotes me better than I do. Most cartoonists really don't know how to promote themselves, with the exception of maybe Keith Knight or Hugo Kobayashi, those guys both have different approaches, but they're pretty good at getting themselves out there. Ed Brubaker, jesus. Ace Backwards, that guy's fucking everything. From comics, to little zines, to grafitti, he's everywhere.

What do you think about the future of comics?

It depends, the future of comics for superheroes, unfortunately, it looks like it is still going. That monster is getting bigger and bigger, and consuming everything in its path. As for the real comics, as I call them, everything from alternative, down to self-published, I don't know. The self-published thing is really taking off, the last couple years, it's been a real trend. Almost everyone I know is doing a zine or a comic, just about. People who can't draw or write, they just pierce their nose and hang out in coffee shops, and that's what they do. It looks okay, but unfortunately for you and I, and a handful of people I still don't see much of a "living" in it, but what disturbs me more is the lack of respect it gets. I've travelled abroad, and it really amazed me, like how places in Europe, and even in Mexico, how comics are just another form of media, another artform, but it's not treated as a child's thing...a waste of time...it will rot your brain, your eyes will go bad, you'll go blind, you'll masturbate...whatever, you know. It's treated with much more respect. In America, as young and stupid as it is, in my lifetime I don't see it changing too much, in the good end. When you have beer commercials with Why Ask Why on it, you know...If X-Men are selling really good, well look, 90% of the country is X-Men mentality, you know. If No Hope isn't selling as good, it's because only 8% of America is the No Hope. I think the underground stuff, and the alternative needs to be marketed harder. I think they could do a little better.



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Zines and Comics...

COMETBUS #32

Aaron busts out with a novella this time, revisiting the last few years. This time through, we get to hear about what it was like to live in the places where he settled down for a while.
#32 *52p digest $2.00*
#30 *60p digest $1.00*

DEEP GIRL * 1-4

Ariel Bordeaux.
Yeah, there's too many damn autobiographical comics out there already, but rarely can you find such in-your-face, ugly, smell the sweat art and stories that are actually really good. Ariel's work also appears in *Real Stuff.*
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#4 20p digest $2.00

OPTIC NERVE #7

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PDP is responsible for some of the fines minicomics ever published.Jason Lutes and Joe Fullerton took the form to its furthest reaches yet.

JASON LUTES

Jason's ***Jar of Fools*** comic "changes the meaning of the words 'graphic novel'", to hear Scott McCloud tell it.

WEDGEHEAD

Wedgehead, leads the reader through an examination of the comics form, with lots of good gags thrown in. *14p mini $.75*

WESTERN ROMANCE

Okay, this one is two sixteen page micros with color covers. One of them has pictures from a romance comic and dialog from a western comic, and the other is the opposite. They come in a little envelope with the title stamped on it. Crazy.
$2.50

JOE FULLERTON

Joe has done a couple strips in *Tower Classics*, a comic adaptation of Doestsevsky's *The Honest Thief* for Tome Press, and other scattered anthology work. His art is remarkable and unique, well suited to his unusual subject matter.

DIES IRAE

It's religious, it's in Latin.
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ISKANDER

Two boys ponder the death of their dog. *20p mini with color covers $1.50*

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Crazy psycho-surreal stream-of-consciousness comics exploring the full range of misery that life has to offer. "Knick knack paddy whack, give the dog a cat, this old dog is getting fat". *52p mini $1.00*

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A day in the life of a mink, in Joe's charming style.
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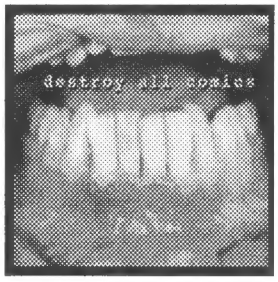

SOUL TWINKIES #7*

Bobby Madness
Sex, drugs, violence... all that you have come to expect from the master of punk rock cartooning! Plus, this issue features a special graffiti section, and some crazy Custom Culture kinda stuff. Truly underground comix.
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Dead Child mini

Bobby Madness
depressing, horrible
12p mini $.50

TUNA MELT *

Tuna Casserole #9
Tuna Melt features art and comics by P. Reeves, Steve Erdman, Joe Judd, Tom Hart, Paul Mavrides, and many others. Filled almost entirely with one-page strips... it is the complete destruction of word and image.
84 p digest with full-color wrap-around cover $5.00

Jim Woodring

Author of the popular Fantagraphics title JIM and of several graphic novels: Aliens, Freaks, Frank, The Book of Jim, and Blue Block. A more generic sounding bunch of books you couldn't hope for... Enjoy! Jim's minicomics feature high quality reproductions on attractive, colorful, heavy stock. All are 1/2 standard minicomic size.

Book of the Dead

Jim's religious views on death and the afterlife obliquely set down in a pithy, profusely illustrated " book."
16p mini $2.00

Kava Kava Diary *

The sweet mood induced by this renowned dream tonic sometimes tempts one to overindulge. Then - toper beware! The sad effects are displayed here as a cautionary public service. Please note that pending FDA regulations may prohibit the sale of kava kava. *16p mini $2.00*

Lobster Fight!!

Murky B&W photos of berserk lobsters in local seafood store with crippling pins furtively removed. Clarity is poor, but all the excitement of this great sport is preserved. Insulting caricature of humorless clerk included.
15p mini $2.00

One Green Tree

art by Jim Woodring. Story by Scott Deschaine. Innocuous and educational book explains to children what trees do for us. Makes a strong case for not pulling them all down.
16p color comic $1.00

Page 35 *

One of the very worst nightmares of Jim's entire life reproduced just as recorded on page 35 of his dream journal. Not recommended. Quickly but tellingly drawn.
15p mini $2.00

WOW COOL

23 Skidoo *

Al Columbia
This controversial cartoonist has come a long way since his debut book Doghead. Al's regular Fantagraphics title The Biologic Show lurches onto stands this month and he dishes up this compact mini as the perfect companion to it. Four intense stories of sex, gore, toads and giant eyeballs introduce you to his strange world. *28p mini. $1.00*

last and least...

ANDY'S CHAIR 3

Lots of hate and pain and evil and other icky stuff that never happens in the real world. A zine by Marc Arsenault that documents a year in his life that he describes as "like one big round trip where I never left" Lots of unfunny comics, boring stories and generally atrocious layout... as brought to you by the self-effacing designer of this here very ad. Enough angst to get you through 'til holiday depression sets in. *52p digest $1.00*

puppydoglove.

Marc Arsenault
A sinister little comic zine. Highly recomended. Funny!
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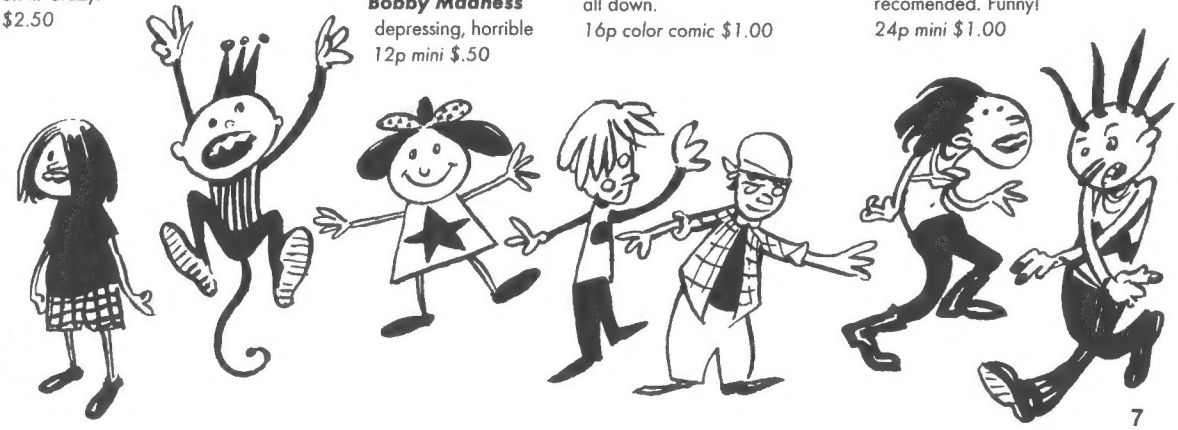
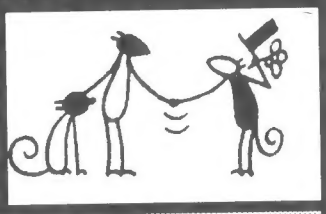


an interview with Chris Ware

This interview was conducted by Dylan Williams, on the phone between Berkeley, California and Chicago, Illinois about a month after the Feb. 14, 1994 release of Acme Novelty Library #1, published by Fantagraphics.

Dylan Williams: My first question is to have you introduce yourself...



Chris Ware: Going around the room or something?

Just...I don't know...you're Chris Ware and what do you do?

(laughs) I don't know, what do you mean, on a regular basis?

Okay, what do you do to make money besides comics?

That's it.

Really.

I'm living really cheaply. I sell original artwork, sometimes I'll occasionally sell paintings, but those take a really long time to do and I don't like selling them. I've done occasional illustration here and there but I'm really bad at it. I don't like doing it too well; it's really hard for me to work with someone else's idea.

I know how that is.

Mostly I'm just kind of living month to month until it seems like I really have to get a job. I've been doing all right now, I'm just lucky I guess.

That's great.

I guess, yeah it is, it's really not a place to make money.

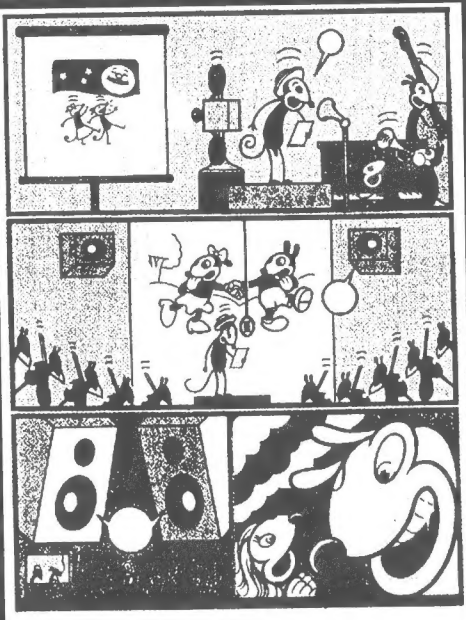
Dan (Clowes) seems to be doing pretty well.

Yeah but...

...but he's been at it forever.

Well he deserves it too because he's honestly really great.

...okay, next question: Where are you from artistically, what schools...



a Ware illustration for Tower Record's PULSE! magazine.

artistically...

yeah what (forgets what he meant by the question) schools did you go to?

I went to the University of Texas in Austin and then I went to the Art Institute in Chicago where I did not finish my MFA. I supposedly graduated a year ago, but I still have six hours left. Pretty stupid.

What publications have you been in?

In Austin I was in the Daily Texan for five years.

Wow.

It was where I did most of my stuff. It was when I was in school. I did a weekly or a daily strip there. There were a lot of cartoonists down there at the time. There are still some there too. I would say at one time there were 20 cartoonists all working on a regular, either daily or weekly, basis. It was kind of fun.

That was going to be one of my questions; what was living in Austin like? There were so many people down there.

It was really nice.

Did it help you to be a better artist yourself, being around artists that much?

Probably. One of my best friends down there: John Keen, he and I started doing strips more or less at the same time. He started a little bit after me.

What has he done stuff in?

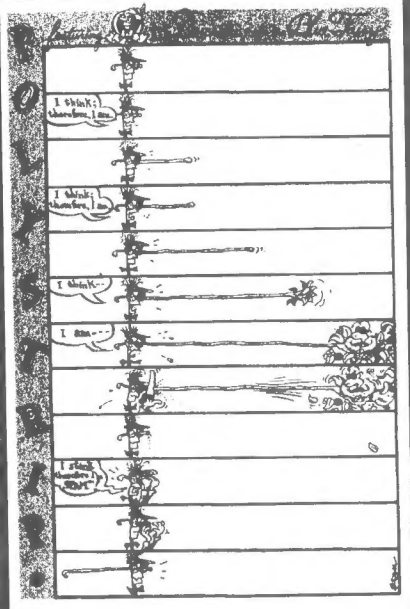
Wait, say that again.

What things has he been published in?

He hasn't been published around too much, he had something in the National Lampoon once, which is what always irritates me. There have been a number of articles written about Austin cartooning and he's always left out, even though he did more than anyone else, since he wasn't published afterwards because his stuff is too weird. Actually, strangely, James Sturm did a book that he and I were in, a long time ago, I guess you could count that.

What was the book?

I don't remember the name of it. He (Keen)



One of John Keen's strips as printed in Jab #4

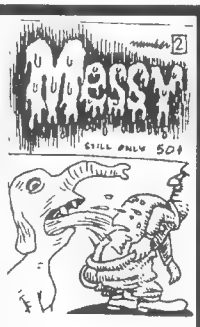
experimented a lot. We would at least convince ourselves that we were fairly miserable people and would try to get that sense into the comic strip. He did it better han I did, I think. (He did) things you've just never seen before.

It really makes you push yourself when you've got friends that are doing it. The whole Puppy Toss thing is like that too.

Plus, when you have regular deadlines like we all did, we would all feel terrible at the same time...

(Laughs) I guess it's not too great.

No. It was. I really missed it a lot when I first got up here (Chicago). I didn't draw anything regularly for about six or eight months and then I started doing stuff in New City. All of a sudden I was alone doing it and there was really no one to talk to. I would hang out occasionally with Dan Clowes and Gary Leib and Terry Laban and Archer Prewitt, and we'd sit around and draw, basically, pornography. That was kind of fun, but it wasn't the same thing.



One of the Dan Clowes orchestrated mini-comics.

Was it in those little mini-comics?

Yeah.

There's a whole bunch of them. We sold 'em at Comic Relief.

(Dan Clowes has) got all the originals. I'm sure we could just crank them out. They're all purely...fundamentally valueless. They're kind of funny drawings and of course (Dan's) just kick the ass of everyone else in there. I don't know how that guy could...every drawing he did was just a mind bender and I was just trying to get a hand to look right.

What kind of family did you come from? Was your family artistic? Basically what I'm asking is: did you grow up with art?

(Laughs) Well, I don't know. No one ever tried to tell me what not to do. My grandfather and my mother were in the newspapering business, as was my great-great grandfather.

In general or strips?

My grandfather wanted to be a cartoonist and he ended up being a sports writer and then managing editor. My mom wrote...was a reporter and an editor too. So I grew up always going to the art department, seeing these guys airbrushing photographs or doing cartoons and I was just amazed. I really wanted to do that. There were a lot of books lying around the house that my grandfather got free from the syndicates in the fifties. I'd sit around and read them. He'd get letters from his friend that were...he used to correspond with Walt Kelly and people like that. There was a cartoonist that lived down the street. I think that guy in the Comics Journal mentioned this, which is weird because I never told anyone this before, but he was an old cartoonist and I used to go to his house and watch him draw. He was kind of an old guy that drank a lot; it was kind of sad. He drew really well; I just...I was amazed. His stuff still...I see it, we've got a couple in the house...my mom does, they hold up really well. He's got a looser line than anyone else doing editorial cartoons now, by far.

Yeah, it seems there's a lot of alcoholic cartoonists.

That's an apt description of pretty much everyone: fat, balding, alcoholic, cigar smoking dead people eventually. It's kinda sad. At least we have something to look forward to, right?

Yeah.

I need to start learning how to play golf pretty soon. Avoiding our wives.

What are your influences? Clowes told me that you like McCay and somebody named J.R. Williams who I'd never heard of except for his counterpart nowadays.

That's funny that you'd mention that. He did a strip called Out Our Way none of which I have any more. I gave 'em all to David Collier because he loves it so much. So I mailed them off to him but he's not actually one of my favorites by any means. He's okay. Probably my very favorites would be the typical: Robert Crumb and George Herriman. Cliff Sterret particularly. Frank King...a lot...he did Gasoline Alley, I think his work is wonderful. Lionel Fienenger, the stuff I look at a lot is things like that. I don't look at them as much as I used to.

the "avant-garde" strip art of Lionel Fienenger from 1906

Did you see how they are reprinting Barney Google?

No, I didn't.

Yeah, I think Kitchen Sink is doing it.

Wow, that's good. I wish they'd reprint some of the other stuff. I'm upset that that Polly And Her Pals thing didn't take off. They always reprint that Steve Canyon crap. It's not crap, but I hate the fact that all those adventure strips are supposed to be so wonderful.

Do you know who Noel Sickles is?

No.

He was the guy Caniff got it from. He's Toth's big influence. He's this really obscure guy who kind of started all that.

Wow, that's weird. There was this guy named Ray Gotto who did Ozark Ike, have you ever seen that? It's like Charles Burns in the 1940s.

Wow, no.

They're great. They're really inspiring. You could probably find it in one of your comic stores there. Just look for Ozark Ike. They're really neat. He does goofy stuff, like sound effects bouncing off of people's heads and it's sort of Nancy-like, in that he used a lot of the same poses, the three quarers view. He has that same kind of pseudo-woodcut brush line that Charles Burns and Caniff's stuff sort of hearkens back to.

Do you like Burns?

Oh yeah, there's very few people I really don't like, that I don't get

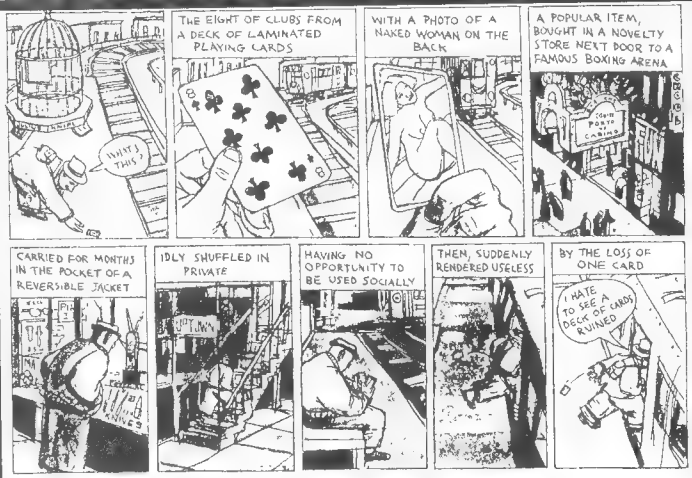
ALL THEM DAYS YUH GOT HAVE DONE BEEN CARTED OFFN TH' FIELD, OZARK?
THEY SHO GAVE ME TH' BIZNESS, AWRIGHT-- AN' NOT LIKE AH EXPECTED/...
HOPE AH KIN REPAY TH' FANS BY BANGIN' A BATCH UP HOME RUNS TODAY.
DON'T RECKON HE LL G T MUCH USE OUT UP TH' TUGA. SKIS, TUXEDO OR SOMP UP THEM OTHUH PRESENTS, BUT SOON AS THIS GAME IS OVUH HE KIN STEP INTO THAT BIG, NEW AUTYMOBILE AN'
...NO DRIVUH'S LICENSE !!
OOPS!...

a 1950 Ozark Ike daily strip by Ray Gotto

much out of.

Who don't you like?

I don't know, I don't really want to say. It's not that I don't like them, it's just that I don't read them. I don't really get anything out of them. I think Dan Clowes is great and I think Ben Katchor is probably the best writer in comics ever, by far. His stuff...I don't think enough attention can be called to it. He's doing things with it that no one else has ever attempted. That sounds corny because people say that about the lamest crap all the time, but he really is. He's a brilliant writer. He's putting words and pictures together in ways that I've never seen or thought of before. In very subtle metaphorical ways of sophistication that comics have honestly never seen and that's why I think most people don't read it because they just don't get it. There's always some sort of obvious connection but when you read his stuff continually there's a profound tragedy to it. They're wonderful.


THE EIGHT OF CLUBS FROM A DECK OF LAMINATED PLAYING CARDS
WITH A PHOTO OF A NAKED WOMAN ON THE BACK
A POPULAR ITEM, BOUGHT IN A NOVELTY STORE NEXT DOOR TO A FAMOUS BOXING ARENA
WHAT'S THIS?
CARRIED FOR MONTHS IN THE POCKET OF A REVERSIBLE JACKET
IDLY SHUFFLED IN PRIVATE
HAVING NO OPPORTUNITY TO BE USED SOCIALLY
THEN, SUDDENLY RENDERED USELESS
BY THE LOSS OF ONE CARD
I HATE TO SEE A DECK OF CARDS RUINED

"A profoundly tragic" strip by Ben Katchor.

Besides that one book there's not much of his stuff in print.

No, not unless you can get it regularly and I'm disappointed that The Stranger in Seattle chooses to carry it so infrequently. We carry it here in New City, which is great.

I've never even seen New City. I've heard so much about it. Is it nationally distributed at all?

You can get a subscription.

It's got your stuff in it...

Yeah, big deal. It's usually off register anyways.

That was another question. How do you deal with all that? Somebody told me that they tell you at the last minute what the color is going to be (Ware's strip appears printed in one or two colors mostly).

God, where do you hear all these things? Well, basically it's true. They tell me either on Friday or Saturday. They tell me what the colors are and I kind of base the content of the strip around that. Lately I've been doing a continuing story which I'm sure is just completely boring to everyone. I mean it's even boring to me when I look at it now.

Because you drew it.

Yeah, but I was trying to be objective and I thought "this is just dull, nothing is happening." Then the colors are odd, if they're not necessarily a primary combination or at least a complementary combination, then I'll do something a little more expeimental or something a little stupider. Which is what generally gets more response anyway. I try to vary it, and if the colors stay the same for a long period of time I'll vary it anyway just to keep myself and whoever may happen to be reading it interested. There's so much regularity. I still don't understand why comic books have to be the size they are now, because they're based on a mother sheet size that was specific to the printing industry at a particular time and is no longer the form.

Yeah, comics today...

They're hideously ugly. I mean, even if you take a piece of paper, fold it in half and cut it down to comic size it's just an ugly thing. It's like Sans-a-belt pants, they're fundamentally ugly. No matter what color or what's printed. I don't understand why.

I really like digest size.

Yeah, I do too. Fantagraphics has been really nice. With every issue of my comic book they are letting me do whatever I want basically.

How many issues do you have planned out?

They're talking up to at least eight now. The next issue (#2) going to be really big and then the third issue will be small and thicker. The fourth issue'll be big again. The fifth issue will hopefully be in a horizontal format. It's really nice and they're really being cool about it, the next issue will be on white paper and then the third issue will be on newsprint.

They're letting you pick the paper weight and everything?

...within budget. Kim Thompson called me last week and the second issue was going to be on newsprint because of it's size. Originally they were reluctant to do it big at all because they didn't think retailers'd take it, but now they are being relly cool and thinking maybe other people would want to do something big. It's going to be 11X14 inches. Originally it was supposed to be on newsprint and (Thompson) called to say that he found a printer that would do it for

Ware's Quimby Mouse from Acme #2

$150 more, on white paper. He asked if I would want to do that instead. They call me every once in a while to ask me stuff like that and I think, "You guys are not publishers, you're just nice guys or something." He found out that he could save money on the first issue and he called me up to ask how I wanted to spend the extra money, so I got an extra color. Rather than keeping the profits for themselves they try to make a better product, which I don't see anywhere else in the industry.

Drawn and Quarterly does a good job.

Yeah, you're right, the stuff they've just been doing with Chester Brown and all that.

It's still at comic size.

...but their paper stock. Even though the ink kind of stinks, I think that's that soy ink. Did you notice that? It kind of smells like dirt when you open it up.

Yeah, that's true.

I was suprised how much that affected me. I've asked everyone that and they go, "Yeah, that stunk."

I like the way they feel.

When I picked up the latest issue of Palookaville and Yummy Fur I felt ashamed 'cause they look so good.

Yeah, that's another question: do you like Seth's stuff, or how do you feel about it?

I think he draws really well.

You guys have a really similar bent towards antiquity.

Someone else told me that....

And that clean line too.

Clean line...boy. I just had a copy of his latest book open the other day ' cause I like the way he composed a panel. He used a grey tone, a black and a white. That's basically the way I work too, it's almost a guaranteed problem manufacturer, and he seems to solve it really well.

With the greytone...

Just having the limited means with which to work. His stuff works really well, at least visually.

What do you think about Krigstein?

Yeah, sure I was always pretty amazed by the guy. I think everyone is. I wish someone would put out a book of his stuff. He did paintings too, I almost bought one. They had a show of them right after his death. They're really pretty bad.

Really?

They're sort of like late modernist chromatism or something. One of those weird theory paintings. Apparently his wife won't sell any of his comic artwork, what of it he had. Who cares, it's nice that they're reprinting stuff. That's the great thing about comics.

You and he have a really similar approach to time. I don't know if you've noticed it.

No.

Just how you dissect a moment and all that.

It's getting worse with me. The weekly strip now is almost in real time. However long it takes you to read it is how long it happens in the strip. It's getting worse, that's what I mean when I say I think it's getting boring. It took eight panels for a character to put his pants on last week. Actually that's wrong, it took more than that. I got him on the toilet for fifteen panels.

I think it's really necessary. I don't think enough people are aware of that stuff.

I'd like to make something...if you look at it you can't help but read it. As soon as you start looking at it you're reading. Once you go from one panel to the other I want the character to be alive on the page. The way that people move their bodies and the conversational rhythms that occur and hand gestures when people say things they're constantly putting their hands up to their face, scratching their noses, shifting in their chairs; I think that's really important. If you can work that into a strip, not only can you sometimes indicate more about a character, you can create more of a sense of real time. Sometimes I don't even care what the character's saying, as long as I'm getting those gestures down I think it's really important. It's pretty easy to do in a comic strip. A lot of people don't do it though, they just draw little stick figures. Basically all they are is well drawn stick figures standing there. You know, it's the Saturday morning cartoon effect, which can work, but even Nancy had a quality of gestures. Peanuts is one of the best for that.

They're so great. I just went out and bought a bunch of those...they're so neurotic.

I agree. I used to sit around and read those all the time when I was a kid. I used to color them in with crayons, for what it was worth, I don't know why.

Here's one: Dan Clowes said you drove from Chicago to New Mexico to visit George Herriman's house.

I flew to Arizona and stayed with my great-aunt...

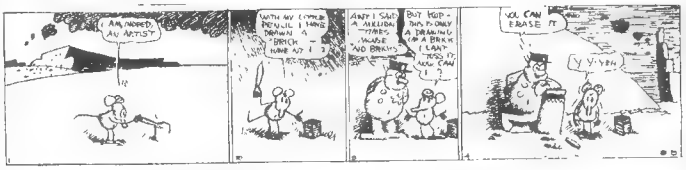
He said you travelled, I probably just heard what I wanted to...

I stayed at my great-aunt Tootsie's house, she lived in Scottsdale, Arizona in one of the earliest subdivisions there. Then I rented a car and drove out to Monument Valley and just tried to find some evidence of where he was. I actually found the hotel resort that James Swinnerton used to stay at.

James Swinnerton's Jimmy from 1915

Who's that?

J. Swinnerton. He's a cartoonist. He's not the first daily strip cartoonist but one of the first. He did the tigers with the little round heads and the big eyes. He's the one who got Herriman to go out and stay there. Herriman never lived there, he just would go out on summers. Later in his life he hardly went out at all. Swinnerton just went out there because he was diagnosed with some sort of weird lung problem. If he didn't go out there he would die, apparently. He ended up living fifty more years or something nutty like that. Herriman would go out there and stay and I found that, strangely enough, a lot of the businesses were named after the people he would stay with, which is the Wetherills. There's a Wetherills Hotel and I met the guy who owned it, and he had no idea, of course, who any of these people were. These people actually started Kayenta, which is the trading post there. I think in that book on George Herriman they say that undoubtedly if Keyenta had a post office he would never have left. Well, it does have a post office, of course, and it has had one for a very long time. In fact there was a photograph out there of the post office in the 1920's. It's really nice, it's an amazing place. He mostly lived in California. He had a pretty rotten life I guess. His wife and his daughter died on the same day, a year apart. I think they were both auto-accidents. He had a pretty nice sense of the injustice of life.



a 1938 George Herriman Krazy Kat daily

Yeah, his strips just speak.

They were pretty amazing. It's amazing because no one can imitate him, without looking just like him.

That's one thing I find annoying is the amount of people who try and draw like him, without looking just like him. It's homage and all that, but I don't know...

Strangely, though, if you look at his strips and you look at the cartoonists of the time...his style of drawing is much more accomplished than it appears but it's not that different than a lot of the...it's full of the same conventions.

Like Bud Fischer and those guys?

Especially Frederick Opper. They're very similar.

Who's that?

He did Happy Hooligan.

That nutty Happy Hooligan from 1925

You really know your history.

Well, I really like that stuff. The way that they drew hands, the way that they composed a panel. Even if you look at a lot of strips, there's a lot of cliches that pop up; there's the house in the background with the tree next to it and the little antenna coming out of the house, it always represents a picture on the wall. I think Segar used it a lot. The one that I've seen the most is where someone's standing in a house, Cliff Sterrett used it a lot, it'd be the corner of a room with a vase and then in the background 'd be a curtain drawn back with a circular window with a cross shaped window bar. It's not like I'm looking for these things, I just started noticing that they all drew this thing. You find it in every cartoonist's strip.

The recurring plant/window from a 1927 Polly and Her Pals.

Did they all know each other?

Yeah, they all worked together a lot, for most of the same papers anyway. Winsor McCay and Cliff Sterett, all those people worked for the (New York) American. Herriman, Tad, and I'm getting fuzzy here, it's been awhile...they all worked for the same people too, he might have worked with Winsor McCay too but I don't know what effect they had on each other.

I just got to watch the animated Winsor McCay video. There's this part that really reminded me of when you had Jimmy Corrigan alone on an island.

What was that?

In Gertie the Dinosaur. It's this one scene where Gertie's by the sea shore and there's some sea monster. There's a cliff and the hills, like you had.

Wow.

Did you know of that?

No. The first Gertie cartoon?

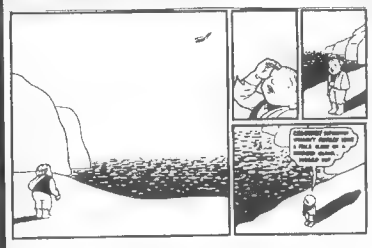
It's the one where he tries to get Gertie to lift his leg or her leg.

That's the first one he did, right?

Yeah.

I guess I stared at those drawings a lot so probably they're stuck in my head plus it's a kind of easy thing to draw.

So, my next question... when the Journal reviewed your stuff on that one little page there...



From Blab #7, Ware's McCay-esque beach front.

That's like a Comics Journal one page infomercial.

...they called you meticulous and then later on in their catalog they called you insanely meticulous. How do you respond to that kind of stuff?

I think it's flattering.

That's a really conscious thing you're going for?

No. I just am that way. It makes me angry to see so many people who do things that don't care about what they do and are purposely flippant, purposely put out things that are like: "Oh, I did this in two hours. Fuck you." Which is the overall effect of it.

So, it's almost like they don't care.

I don't see why anything that takes time, care, effort and that kind of application should be labeled as either anal retentive or some other negative word.

My stuff is like that too, not always, but when I sit down to it I'm really "anal" about my lettering and stuff.

You're not being anal. You're being careful. It's just a word used by people that can't draw and have no ideas to justify their dislike for people that are intelligent, careful, and want to make something that's worthwhile, I think. Of course, that's probably a rationalization too, forget it.

Do you redraw stuff?

Sure.

Like if you draw a page and it's all wrong would you go ahead and redraw it?

It depends. If I'm doing a weekly strip, I've kinda gotten past doing that because I have to appear. I might be doing a story like the storyline I've been doing for New City. I've actually thrown pages out of it, without telling any of the readers, gone back and redrawn the page out of sequence, and just run it without telling anyone. For what it's worth, no one knows what's going on anyways.

That's one of the most interesting things about having readers, especially in a newspaper strip, is that you get to mess around with how they digest things.

That's true.

Would you rather be doing a comic strip than actually doing a comic book?

Oh I see: I'm not really...no I can't do anything without having some sort of deadline otherwise I'm too lazy, I wouldn't get it done. The comic strip allows you to have a weekly deadline and then forces you to get something actually done. Then I can go back, review it and edit it. If I was just doing a comic book I would run tons of junk in it. This way I can at least edit it down to a point where I think it's concise. Otherwise, I'd just throw a bunch of junk in there that wouldn't be worth looking at. I just want to make it as compact as possible, put as much stuff in there as I can without having it be oppressive. Make it worth it. Cartoons are the perfect medium for making something so dense that you have to read it over and over again. At least the way my mind works, I don't know about other people, but if I read something in a book about a character, say a Faulkner book, and a hundred and fifty pages later the character comes up again. I think: "Wait a minute, I've read that name before." Then you start going back and think: Let's see, the pages in my left hand were this thick and I remember reading the word on the upper left hand corner." But in a comic book you immediately have a recognizable visual reference so that you can make those pictures much more dense. I like to have something where if someone was reading, they could say "Oh, wait a minute." They could turn back and they could know exactly where something is. Those kind of interconnections, I don't think are possible in any other medium, especially not film, which I'm sick of cartoons being compared to.

That was something Krigstein talks about in this one interview. He says how Eisner was doing comics in terms of film.

I still do not understand the appeal of Eisner's stuff. I really don't. It seems so melodramatic. Over-thought and over wrought! The idea of putting a comic book in a newspaper (which Eisner did with his Spirit sections in their original presentation) I think is really cool.

He did have some really neat concepts as far as over-all stuff goes. I like the soap opera-ness of his stuff. How there's recurring characters.

Right...Where did you read an interview with Krigstein?

In that Squa-Tront.

What! Really! No!

There's a whole Squa-Tront devoted to Krigstein.

What's the name again?

It was the E.C. fanzine in the seventies.

WHAT GAME? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THOSE LIES ABOUT SHIRLEY? WHAT ARE YOU STALLING FOR? EXPECTING SOMEBODY? YOU KEEP LOOKING AT THE CLOCK...
THE HUM CAME FROM FAR OFF... LIKE A BEE... DRONING CLOSER.. IT WAS CLANCEY... RIGHT ON TIME!
YEAH, I'M WAITING FOR SOMEONE, ED! LOOK!
HUH?
THE MOTORCYCLE SKIDDED ACROSS THE GRAVEL AND CAME TO A STOP BY THE DINER STOOP..
A STATE TROOPER! WHY, YOU DIRTY...

Krigstein's work for E.C. comics from 1964.

What's it called?

Squa-Tront. It was something an alien said in an E.C. science fiction comic. The interview is totally insightful. I think it was done in the sixties too, so it's while he was still...

Aware.

Have you seen the stuff he did after E.C.?

No, I have never really tried to...

That stuff is great.

I feel so ignorant. What companies was he doing it for?

For Timely, you know the Marvel/ Atlas thing. They'd give him these four pagers and he'd cram in 72 panels on four pages or whatever. He set all these records...actually it's kind of like your stuff.

Wow, I was not aware of this.

That's what I'm saying about the time stuff 'cause he was really into that dissecting the moment, looking at it from different angles.

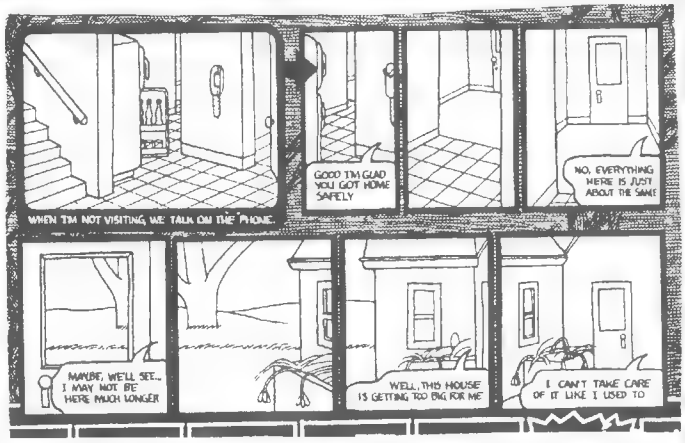
This is like revelation time.

I was looking at this boxed E.C. crime set and there's this other artist named John Alton. He looks like your stuff too, but he didn't have the time thing down. Stylistically, he had that fine brush thing.

I'm interested in the specifics of your storytelling: the impact of time, the way it's laid out seems thoroughly conscious, you really think it out. Do you script your stuff out?

No.

You just do it "stream of consciousness?"


WHEN I'M NOT VISITING, WE TALK ON THE PHONE.
GOOD I'M GLAD YOU GOT HOME SAFELY
NO, EVERYTHING HERE IS JUST ABOUT THE SAME
MAYBE, WE'LL SEE... I MAY NOT BE HERE MUCH LONGER
WELL, THIS HOUSE IS GETTING TOO BIG FOR ME
I CAN'T TAKE CARE OF IT LIKE I USED TO

One technique of Ware's storytelling: an out of panel conversation/ narration from Pictopia

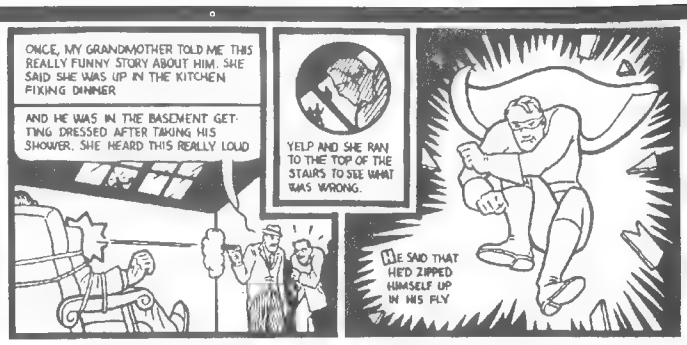
Uh-huh.

WOW! Do you lay it out?

No.

You just do it right on the pages?

Uh-huh. There's nothing to wow about because I think it's much easier that way. I don't see how anyone could sit down and try to think ahead of themselves. I would create the most boring stuff if I sat down and scripted things because the sort of associations that occur while you're drawing and the ideas that you get are the real ideas. I don't think it's possible to have a fundamental idea when you start out scripting or laying out a strip. I think that's silly. What's the point? You get bored, first of all, drawing it. I never know how any of my strips is going to end at all. I start out with a blank page. I might make some basic decision like: "The first row will be three and three quarter inches. Tall panels and maybe I'll stick one in that's taller." Then as I go along I might draw something in the background and think: "Wow, I'll use this." I'll draw it again or light it up with another image on the page or I might redraw something...as far as in the long term storytelling the source of associations that you want to occur in a story can only happen if you let them occur naturally. Your brain is a very organized thing. I think mine is, I hope, because things keep on popping up and I notice them. I might have a vague idea of what I want to do. The only way those things can come together...sometimes I'll be thinking "I'd like to do this..." and then I'll think "...oh wait, I already did that. I forgot." It's just more fun. I hear about people writting stuff and...I think Dan Clowes' approach to it is pretty good. He writes really fast, which I think is a similar way to do it plus, I don't know if this is true or not, but Terry Laban told me that (Clowes) draws, pencils, inks one panel at a time, he doesn't actually do the whole page. I think that's the way the Hernandez brothers do it, but I'm not sure. I don't know, but for me I like to have the over-all page be much more of a composition. I'm writing, with a pencil, drawing and writing at the same time, I can do that. Then as I ink it I can do the whole thing at once. Does that answer your question in a really stupid way?


ONCE, MY GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME THIS REALLY FUNNY STORY ABOUT HIM. SHE SAID SHE WAS UP IN THE KITCHEN FIXING DINNER
AND HE WAS IN THE BASEMENT GETTING DRESSED AFTER TAKING HIS SHOWER. SHE HEARD THIS REALLY LOUD
YELP AND SHE RAN TO THE TOP OF THE STAIRS TO SEE WHAT WAS WRONG.
HE SAID THAT HE'D ZIPPED HIMSELF UP IN HIS FLY

Ware's non-sequiter superman story from Raw V2 #3

No that's great.

I just don't see how anyone can do it; script it out.

People've done it forever. I know it's because of the industry, but they've done it for so long. It's like this established thing.

I don't see why...you look at Herriman's originals and I'm almost positive that he hardly sketched anything. I know I read in the book that he lightly sketched but I've examined them so closely and I hardly saw any. For awhile I didn't draw in pencil at all. I'd just draw right on the page with ink. That had it's limitations.

Yeah, Alex Toth doesn't lay his stuff out at all. Do you know his stuff?

I'm vaguely familiar with it.

He did Space Ghost. There's just a few artists that I know of that didn't lay their stuff out. I think it gives you total spontaneity.

Last week in my strip I definitely had some ideas that I wanted to get worked into the story and I never got around to them. I just ended up the strip...everything that ended up happening in there I didn't expect to happen at all.

Is that the one where he's putting on his pants?

Yeah, right. Maybe it's a stupid way of working, I don't know. I was reading about how Vladimir Nabokov would compose using three by five index cards. He'd keep reordering them with notes and such. Gustave Flaubert, I've read his correspondence with George Sand. When he was writing Sentimental Education there's one part that happens where the character's supposed to be in a forest. He wrote 72 pages of description simply of the forest itself. He spent a week deliberating on what he would use to describe long legged insects. He didn't like the French word for "katydid" because it had a particular assonance that fouled the poetic effect of the paragraph that it was in. So, he wrote to George Sand if she could come up with a word. He finally decided on long legged insects and of course, edited the entire 72 pages down to four pages and that part was left out. Different people work in different ways. William Faulkner wrote Light In August which is one of the great books, I think, in four months. That's just an incredibly involved, beautifully constructed book. It's just amazing. Who knows...

Yeah, I think it's just up to the individual, for the most part. Aesthetics...

Not even that, it's what drives you to do it. I just imagine William Faulkner furiously writing and I imagine Gustave Flaubert practically having to force the pen into the paper, it was such a painful experience for him to do it. He was just constantly depressed. I guess Nabokov, he seemed like a pretty fun guy, actually; collecting butterflies and kissing his wife. He seemed like a really happy fellow.

A friend of mine pointed out that you have a real musical quality to your work...

Wow. Who's that? I like them. That's really nice. I've tried to get that in there for years and then I figured it was pointless.

Yeah, you can almost see the notes. It's partially 'cause they're so like symbols, your characters. They represent things...

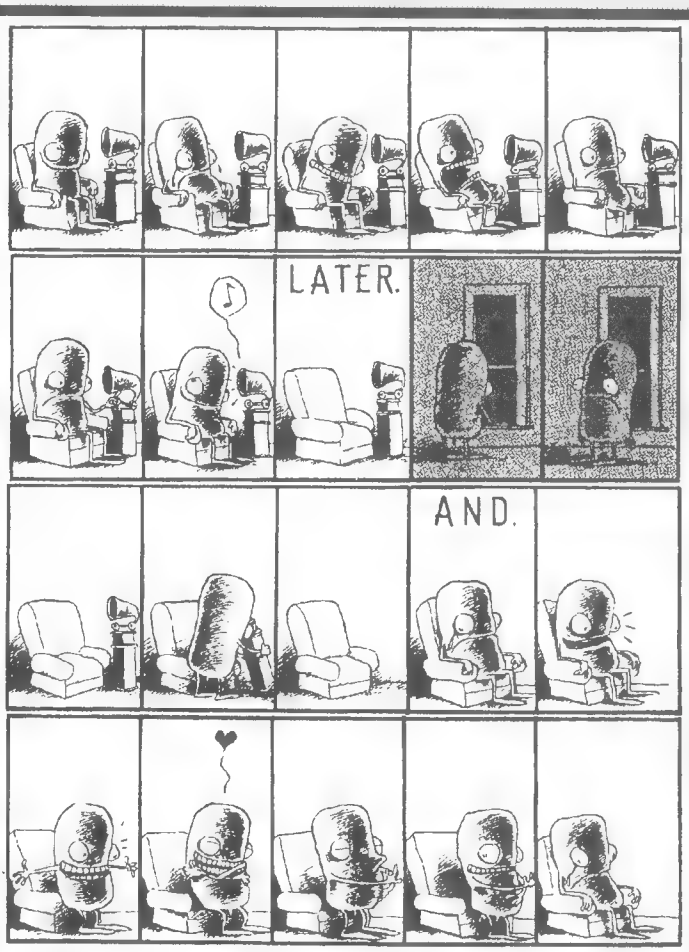
A Ware strip on Joseph F. Lamb in Classical Pulse

God, well that's really nice. That's actually how I've thought about it for years. I did strips without words for years specifically to try and get at that: the music of a cartoon. I just wanted to have the panels each...as you know from what you're saying, when you read a comic strip even if there aren't words it creates tones in your head. It creates a sound. It creates a rhythm and I was trying to get at that sort of feeling when your reading. You draw a character walking and it's kind of like "dah-dun-dah-dun" and then if he runs really fast, then you draw those lines above him so he looks like he's jiggling, that has this "duddle-duddle-dut" sound and then if he stops it's like a beat and if he turns his head it's like a half-beat. If you put those things together, like you're saying, it can almost create this...I don't know how to explain it. It sounds completely absurd, like we should be in some old age home talking about it. So I just started using words because I wasn't getting anywhere with mice.

Was that when you had the potato guy with the eyes falling out...

That was when I started doing it, then I went to mice.

The Quimby stuff. That potato guy looks a lot, sorry to use comparisons so much, like Watterson's stuff.



The ever so musical "Potato Guy" from Acme #3

The one from Raw you mean. Yeah, you're right. That is a horrible...that's redrawn from one that I'd already done and I just completely ruined it. The good thing is that the original art was lost in the mail so I got paid by the insurance company.

Oh...the friend of mine who pointed out the musical thing pointed out that there's even a pick-up before you start your stories. There's a little thing that leads you into the first beat.

Weird. Is this person a cartoonist?

No, actually he's a musician. He works at Comic Relief, his name's Mark Stichman (credit where credit is due department).

Well, tell him thanks. No one has ever mentioned that but that is the way I think about work more than pretty much anything. He's a smart observant fellow.

He's been into comics for ages. He's a nice guy.

I think Robert Crumb said in some interview that he thought a lot of cartoonists were musicians. Cliff Sterrett played, I think, string bass. Crumb plays the ukulele. I've tried to play piano for years now. There are different analogies to music. There's analogies

- this sounds stupid and sounds like I'm completely nuts - but there are anologies between cartoons and every other artform that exists. I mean dance, music, writing, art...everything. It's all there and you have to understand it to a certain extent. The way the human body moves, how to get it down on the page and how to get a musical rhythm, how to create a story that's convincing, how to set a place, how to create a drawing that's either empathetic or gives you distance: Everything...it's mind boggling when you think about it.

That's why I like it so much 'cause you get to try everything.

Me too and then there are people who try to tell us that we're idiots.

Gil Kane once called comics "some commando art training camp from hell." That's a typically Gil Kane way of saying it but...it's really true. You have to know how to do everything. You can't just be a frustrated film maker unless you are Jack Kirby.

The thing is that all the strips that're in the paper are what most people consider comics, I don't even think of as comics strips anymore.

Peanuts is okay.

Yeah it is, I have to agree.

His wiggly line's pretty cool.

But so much of it is just...II could see why people think it's just this tossed off kind of thing. So many of them rely on cliches and visual ideas that they just developed and used over and over again. It's embarrassing. I don't think that that's what cartoons are. I don't think that they're the same idea over and over again. That's one way of approaching it.

Yeah, even Nancy would have something different...Nancy is just great.

They're amazing.

There's a mythology to your character. Do they represent anything in particular? Are they auto-biographical or are they just concepts?

I don't know how to answer that. They're just what I can actually draw that doesn't look stupid, basically.

Well, is Jimmy Corrigan at all auto-biographical (boner question)?

Sure, just like everything else is. I've had friends accuse me of being a liar because "You're not really that sad and lonely." First of all, how do they know and at one time everyone feels that crappy. I don't want it to be that "he's just this crappy depressed character."

Jimmy really does make people sad.

Crap, yeah I bet. It seems like so many things being done now don't admit that humans are going to look at them- or listen to them, like the music we have, and are forced to see in movies.

But that's what the market demands (sarcastically).

Jimmy on the Farm from Acme #1

Plus a lot of cartoonists seem to have this really coarse, snotty adolescent attitude. I just get really sick of it. There's a few like Chester Brown or Joe Matt that show that there are emotions in life other than just feeling nasty about eveything or hateful.

I think it's interesting that a lot of your characters can be really funny and than you have this really sad, mopey character. I'm sure you're tired of hearing how sad he is.

I guess, he doesn't seem that sad to me. I guess there's just moments in everyone's life when they feel really sad. I always felt really stupid because of it. Plus, a lot of the strips in there I did when I was feeling really rotten. There were some of them though, when I felt fine.

I think that there is one problem that comics are just starting to conquer: writing in the artists own feelings. For the longest time it was super heroes and that sappy stuff and that's what separated it from other art forms.

Plus the fact that it's the only artform I can think of where a particular emotional response is expected: laughter. If people don't get that then they get PISSED OFF! You don't go to a painting and expect to feel a certain emotion...you don't listen to music and expect to feel a certain emotion.

That's what I like about Roy Tompkins's work. It's so...wrenches emotions out of your stomach. It's brutal, I feel upset with myself after I finish reading it.
Do you do all your own color separations?

Yes.

Do you do them by hand or on computer?

By hand.

Do you use a computer at all in any of your layouts?

Nope. The only time I might is to typeset things.

There's that preciseness to it.

That's all just drawing. The separations on the comic book were done with a computer. They were re-done but I do them for the paper just by had using a chartpak. Which is not to say that I'm against the computer doing it. At least for those color separations...I wouldn't draw on the computer, I can think of nothing worse. I got this electronic keyboard for Christmas. It sounded like a piano and it's sort of touch sensitive, so I thought, "Cool, I'll get better and I'll practice more and I'll be able to play all that stuff that I used to want to play." I ended up playing with it and said, "Oh, this sounds kind of weird." I know if I had a computer and I tried to draw on it, I'd just end up playing with the programs. In a lot of cases,

it seems like they have more to do with being able to afford to draw rather than atually learning how to draw. It's not like a tool you learn to do something with, it's a tool you learn to learn on, constantly. All my friends that have computers are always buying new crap for them. I hate them.

Yeah I have the same exact problem with them. My friends rag on me because I'm out-dated 'cause I do stuff with a brush.

Tell 'em to FUCK OFF. I'm serious.

I'm learning how to use a computer, but it's like pulling teeth.

I don't know, I've used them for a few pieces. I actually did a strip on a computer...I did it just using symbols, faces, and the typical cartoon language of stars and squiggles and things like that. I just put one symbol in each box so that you would read it as a little story. You would read them as words rather than...not assembled in a sentence format though. It was good for that but I didn't want to...I didn;t like doing that very much. It wasn't that fun to draw on a computer. It's not very fun drawing comics anyways, as I'm sure you know.

Me, I get withdrawel symptoms if I don't draw comics. If I walk away for more than a day, I start feeling a bit out of it.

Oh, that's great. Good for you.

My friend John Keen, who I mentioned earlier, always likened comics to having a really good bowel movement. Especially when you're on a weekly deadline. Honestly, I'd experience this too, he would sit around all day long the day that it was due, trying to come up with an idea. He said, almost invariably, he would never come up with a good idea until he himself had had a satisfying bowel movement. Then the comic strip was just a metaphorical following up of that particular physiological action. It's a similar thing, it kind of builds up and, "Blurf!"

Yeah, when you've been drawing all day you just get sapped out.

That's true. I can't talk to people. After I've been drawing for a while I go out and try to get a can of Coke or something and I just can't form the words.

It's a different world, alien.

What other art forms are you into? Sculpture...film... writing... whatever?

Well, I've tried doing film for a little bit but it cost too much money and it took way to long to do something you had to sit down with your mouth open to watch, basically. There are amazing films but I couldn't see myself doing that 'cause I'm not that good at it and it took too long...more fun to draw. I do paintings and I make mechanical toys. Like those little, movable...

...like with the sparks that come out?

No. I don't know if you've seen pictures of them from the nineteenth century. Movable, articulated dolls that...I've done one of the two headed mouse. His head moves around, the eyes open and close. The hands open and close too if you turn a handle. I did one of a cat head too. They take a year and a half to build, they're pretty slow.

Do you sell them, or do you just keep them?

No, I purposely do them so I don't sell them. They're things I want to keep.

Then the paintings...I sold one painting and I wish I hadn't, actually, because they take a long time too.

Oil paintings?

Yeah. They're cartoony, at least those were.

What about the machine you made...the mini (comic) dispensing machine?

The book dispenser. Yeah, that's sort of a lesser mechanical contrivance. If you dropped a key onto it, it would deliver a miniature dog at the pull of a handle.

HEY, KIDS! COMICS!
Chris Ware in "FROM HERE TO THERE"
HIGH ATOP A CHICAGO TENEMENT, A MAD EXPERIMENT TOOK PLACE!
OLD MONEY-CHECK! PERIOD CLOTHING CHECK!
OBOY! IF MY CALCULATIONS PROVE CORRECT, THIS TIME MACHINE THAT I HAVE CONSTRUCTED WILL TAKE ME RIGHT BACK TO THE YEAR 1937!
ZOWIE!
CHRIS WARE HURLS THROUGH A LAND THAT NEVER WAS - AND NEVER WILL BE!
WOW!
IT'S NO LONGER MY APARTMENT! MY INVENTION'S A SUCCESS!
THIS IS WHAT I'VE ALWAYS DREAMT OF!
AND JUST LOOK AT WHAT I'M FINDING ALREADY! AN EMPTY MOXIE SODA BOTTLE AND A VERY IMPORTANT COMIC-BOOK!!
If you like Chocolate Soda Drink OVALTINE
DEAR GOD! THAT GUY IS THROWING AWAY A DAILY NEWSPAPER WORTH SAWING FOR THE HAND-LETTERED ADS ALONE!
I GOTTA FIND SOMETHING TO CARRY ALL THIS IN!
A MICKEY MOUSE POST TOASTIES CEREAL BOX! PEOPLE ARE CRAZY TO THROW THIS STUFF OUT!
NO TODAY, HE PERSEVERES, ON THE STREET, SORTING AND COMPILING...

David Collier's tribute to Ware from the Comics Journal #165

Where was it?

It was in an art gallery, the same one that had the mechanical cat head too and the big painting.

Do you still have that?

Yep, that's in my living room, for what good it is. It's really not that hard of a mechanism to make. I really like working in wood for art because you're never worrying if you're a good person or not. You just want to make sure you don't cut off your hand shoving it through the saw. I guess Dan told you about that, didn't he?

Yeah, actually two different people told me about it.

What do you feel about small press and the future of comics?

I think it all sucks and I wish you'd all just shut up!

Damn.

Nah, I'm just kidding. I think it's great!

I'm gonna use that on the cover.

That's almost like asking me how I feel about vegetables or something. There it is. I think it's a good thing and I think it should be there. I do stuff like that too, self produced books. It's great that technology has gotten to the point now where you can make things. You can do things on a Xerox machine that are as good as offset printing with a two tone process and such.

There's this Kodak machine that you can do all kinds of crazy reverses and so on.

I read something in one of those magazines you sent me (Skim Lizard - Puppy Toss' anthology comic)...a Dave Sim letter. I thought that was kind of irritating that he would be that way about it. The implication being that he was more or less irritated or miffed by you sending him stuff. I like it when people send me things like that. The only thing I would complain about is that I see a lot of those things at Quimby's (a great bookstore in Chicago). I think that the things that you guys (Puppy Toss) put out is quite a bit higher quality than a lot of the stuff I see. Most of it seems to celebrate this lifestyle of going to see bands and...that's the only thing I would say bugs me. Sometimes I wish there was a little more experimentation with format too. There's no reason why a book can't be two inches square, much bigger too. A lot of people just take the eight and a half by eleven and fold it in half.

Safe.

Yeah, that's the problem. You can put in different paper stocks too. You guys do a lot of offset too, don't you?

We do some. We print our anthology offset. We finally found a really cheap printer. That was the problem, that printers are so expensive. You have to do a thousand or two.

That's true.

Recently, up until now, I've been kind of depressed with comics. How they aren't going anywhere, how there's all these Image comics, but now it seems like there's maybe some hope far down the road, for the artform.

Yeah, I think so. It's slowly defining itself against everything else it's always been compared to. Which is good. Like what was said earlier about movies and so...the farther it gets away from that kind of thing. It seems to be that there's this one trend towards comics that are much more movie like, where they're asically just photogaphs with typeset stuck over them. Like those Star Trek photo-novels. Like that book that John Muth did from that Fritz Lang movie M. They were nice drawings, but the effect of it is just so clunky and weird.

Yeah, I can't...that photo reference stuff...that much of it, where you just paste down a photo and paint over it...it just gets to me.

It's pointless. That's not what I think the best cartoons are about. You look at someone like Kim Deitch, he's just incredible.

Unbelievable. I love his stuff. He inspires me, practically more than anyone I can think of.

Yeah. You guys have a similar bent too. That whole antiquity thing.

He's so thorough and just detailed and careful and involved with what he does.

LIZZIE KIMBO in PINKVILLE
AROUND 1950 I WAS PRETTY HOT ON THOSE OLD CARTOONS MYSELF
AND I WASN'T THRILLED WHEN THEY DO GET BUMPED BY THE KEFAUVER CRIME INVESTIGATIONS, FEATURING FRANK COSTELLOS WRITHING HANDS NUTS TO THAT!
I STAND ON TH' FIFTH AMMENDMENT
WE WERE SAILING ALONG, ON MOONLIGHT BAY...
OH YOU CAN'T STOP ME, I'M STICKIN TO THE UNION
MY PARENTS DUG MODERN ART AND COLLECTED JAZZ RECORDS. THEIR POLITICAL ORIENTATION WAS HOT PINK. WE WERE NOTHING LIKE THE NEIGHBORS AND IT BOTHERED ME.
INDIAN HEROIN HAT
LEFT WING MUSICIAN FRIENDS
FAR OUT BOOKS
WEIRD ART
DADS BONGOS
SELF CENTERED BOOSHWA TWIRP
WEIRD CATS
EAMES CHAIRS
BY 1954, WHEN THE McCARTHY HEARINGS BUMPED HOWDY DOODY, I DON'T MUCH CARE
BY THE WAY, MY DAD'S AN ANIMATOR. TERRIFIC?) IN 60 HE MOVED TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA WHERE HE RUNS AN ANIMATION STUDIO.
OH YES, I REALLY DID FIND A SET OF THE LITTLE LENIN LIBRARY ONCE. IT CRACKED ME UP THEN AND STILL DOES
A BRIEF RUSS PHASE
LITTLE LENIN LIBRARY VOL 7
I EVEN THOUGHT THEY WERE HALF WAY ENTERTAINING BESIDES, BY THEN I TOO WAS WELL ON MY WAY TO BEING A CONFIRMED WEIRDO.
MARX
MADLY FOR ADLAI
Kim Deitch

The Deitch family from Raw V2 #2

Have you seen any of his dad's work?

Yeah.

I just saw an ad in the back of something that his dad drew and it just blew me away.

I used to go to U.T. (University of Texas) library, in Austin, and look at old issues of the record changer. Then I went in there one day and someone had stolen them all.

People shouldn't steal from libraries...that's bad (they should be shot!).

I agree.

Anything else you'd like to talk about? The world of politics?

No not really, Terry Laban's really good at that. He gives great interviews. A smart fella.

Jim Woodring is great in interviews. He comes off sounding so crazy. I want to strive for that. Do you like his stuff?

Yeah. I like his silent Frank things. It occurred to me one day that he and I do sort of a similar thing. He does this silent, old, twenties looking cartoon character walking around in a dumb landscape. The he does things with words about normal people. I thought, "Wait a minute!"

You guys both celebrate the medium more than anything else. Rather than being ashamed of the fact that they're comics they are kind of, "Fuck you! This is comics."

Well, I read and I look at the world more. I don't have a TV. I haven't had one for years now. I try to avoid that sort of thing just 'cause...I don't want to see the world through TV's eyes, which is what most people do. I want to see the world through my eyes. If I get ideas I don't want to get ideas from other ideas. I want to get ideas from the way someone has twisted a napkin or buttoned their shirt or twisted in their chair, something like that because those are real things. That's the main problem with almost everything I see. It's just a regurgitated version of what we're already being fed. A lot of art, at least in the past few years, way up at the end of the twentieth century of modern art, all this post-modern art is just theoretical justifications for that sort of thing. It's just the most inane sort of thing that can happen and all of those things are going to be completely meaningless in a very short peroid of time. It has nothing to do with real life. I don't understand it. I don't see why, if someone does a painting about the Flintstones, it's supposed to be so great. Then putting 'em into a religious setting to make it somehow...to make us aware of the fact that TV has ruined our lives. It's got to be the most valueless statement that you can possibly make. People still feel shitty, cry, all that stuff. That's what it's about. I sound like an asshole...don't print any of that.

from Acme #2

No! It's a great point.

Well, you can print whatever you want.

I would have gotten rid of my TV but I've got a roommate who...It's really dangerous when you're a visual person. It gets in my way.

Well, even the way that things are blocked out on a television screen. If you carry those things over into a comic strip they carry a particular emotional weight that's predetermined but really has nothing to do with one's own experience. When you're talking with someone, at least if you're trying to do it visually, they don't really change in size a heck of a lot. If someone was as big while you were talking to them as they are in proximity on television or a movie, you'd be cleaning out their ear with your tongue or something. That can work, but it has an intense impact...if you keep doing that in a comic strip, close-ups and that kind of thing, it just completely loses it's weight. It's like starting out a song playing the loudest thing you possibly can, it's like you've blown all your options already. You don't want to use up all your tricks at once. There are paintings that use really bright colors all at once. There's a range there you kind of have to work within. I don't know what the hell I'm talking about; I went to art school too long.

THE END

-Chris Ware's comic work has appeared in *Blab, Snake Eyes, Raw, Pictopia, Moko, Pulse!, Classical Pulse!, Jab,* (among others) and his own comic by *Fantagraphics Books: Acme Novelty Library* (of which there are presently three issues). He has a regular strip in Chicago's weekly newspaper: *New City.* He's also a swell guy to talk with.

-If you're interested in reading about the old newspaper strip artists mentioned above then you need to find a copy of *The Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics* which will provide a beautiful starting point.

-Ben Katchor's work is collected in a book published by *Penguin* entitled *Cheap Novelties: The Pleasures of Urban Decay.*

-John Keen's work has appeared in *Jab and National Lampoon.* You can write him at 1407 Waller, Austin, TX 78702.

COMICS! COMICS! COMICS! by Jeff LeVine

I've been working in a comic book store for the last six months or so, and it's helped me learn a lot about comics. For one thing, I'm more aware than ever how much complete and utter garbage comes out every week. Everytime we receive a new shipment I get all excited, daring to hope that there will be at least one or two new comics (out of the hundred or so we get each week) that are worth reading. Generally speaking there aren't. It just doesn't seem like a few good new comics a week, out of all the garbage, is too much to ask for. I see comics as a medium with so much potential, and it frustrates me to no end, that the huge majority of work being done in comics is lowest common denominator crap, not even good enough to compare to really bad, direct to video, B-movies. The domination of these superhero slug-fests and Vertigo-esque fantasy powerfests, and the fact that they won't go away, is especially frustrating to me, as I spend so much of my time and energy trying to make people aware that there is more out there than that.

To digress for just a minute, I'd like to complain about your average Vertigo comic buyer (at least the ones who come into the store I work at). First of all, Vertigo, even if it wasn't a part of DC (the second largest comic book publisher in the United States), would be a huge publisher. Sales on Vertigo books alone count for one-fifth of the comic book marketplace. Their books aren't "alternative." Their books are stupid. The people who buy Vertigo books are stupid too, but what really amazes me is how "cool" and "different" they think they are. Usually dressed in black, in pathetic never-ending imitation of the early eighties lame goth-rock tradition, these losers who worship Anne Rice as the peak of literature, they come into the store each week, buying only those comics with the Vertigo seal of approval. Their lives are oh so very deep and depressing you know. They are outcasts and rebels...they are the lamest of the lame. You know, life can't be that miserable if you can afford to spend money on comic books. At least the adults who buy super hero comics admit they're a bunch of fucking geeks.

I think it's the domination of this kind of crap, that keeps artists and writers who have the skills, from even attempting to make comics of actual worth. Slowly that seems to be changing. More people are making genuinely interesting comics than ever, and one of the main reasons I've started this magazine is to help the few good things to clump together and start to snowball, bringing more and more good people into the world of comics, helping to get attention for more and more interesting work, and eventually destroying the average person's impression that comics are a juvenile art form, that are only about people in tights beating each other up.

Another idea I'd like to destroy, is the idea of a lot of readers of underground/alternative comics, that if a comic isn't funny, it's not good. I mean, I like funny comics as much as the next person, but that's not what comics are about either. I see comics as a unique storytelling medium. Some stories can be funny, but if you're only reading things to laugh, you're missing out on a whole range of emotions that are at least just as important. I'd like to see more comics that make you think, or make you sad, or make you mad. I'd like to see comics with the same level of range, depth and power of short stories. After reading Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli's adaptation of Paul Auster's City of Glass, it really helped to expand my mind even further on the possibilities of what can be achieved with the comic book form. Comics can be a truly wonderful medium, and if more can be done with even half the power of City of Glass, it will be a big step in the right direction to finally getting out of this damn ghetto we've all been stuck in.

At the recent convention in San Diego, a lot of people (myself included) seemed to be talking about how it's starting to seem like there's a new generation of cartoonists who are in love with the potential of the medium. Cartoonists who aren't doing comics to rebel, but just to tell good stories, in their own unique way. Well, it sounds good, but I still think we've got a long ways to go. Maybe things are finally geting a little better, some alternative cartoonists are actually starting to make a modest living just drawing their comics! Now is definitely not the time to sit back and relax, and pat themselves on the back though. Now is the time to re-double our efforts. To get more good books out there more often is absolutely necessary if this stuff is going to get the attention it deserves, and if it's going to ever be able to get out from underneath the shadow of the superhero/fantasy style comics that have dominated the comic book marketplace, people's minds, and the very definition of comics for the last 50 years.

end.

KIRBY vs. PICASSO by James Kochalka

"Jack Kirby is to comic book art what Pablo Picasso is to modern painting." Barry Windsor-Smith said this. The implication is that Jack Kirby is just as good as Picasso and I think that's a load of crap.

Kirby recently died and in issue #167 of The Comics Journal cartoonist after cartoonist (mainstream and alternative) heaped praise on him as a kind of eulogy to his greatness. Soon after reading this, I found a few copies of his "critically acclaimed" New Gods series in a comic book store. I haggled over the price and ended up getting 'em for about $3.00 each (they wanted $4.50). I admit I actually kind of liked the art. It does have a solidity of form reminiscent of Picasso. The writing was terrible, though I imagine Picasso probably wasn't much of a writer either. Both are **visual** story-tellers.

Kirby's imagination is highly praised, and yes, he did create hundreds of different superheroes, but they might as well all be the same character. It's just one solid, thick, powerful wrestler after another. There's about as much emotional resonance as in professional wrestling too.

Now I believe modern art and cartooning are siblings, both fathered by 19th Century caricature. The exaggerations, distortions, and simplifications of charicture are present in both cubism and the comics page.

Still its not easy to compare comics and paintings. Luckily, Picasso helped us by drawing a bonafide comic strip himself, the Dream and Lie of Franco. This two page, 18 panel, wordless comic strip from 1937 is a little hard to follow in a narrative sense, but it is quite expressive none the less. There's a range to the characters that far outstrips Kirby: the ridiculously shaped, hilariously comic Franco, the beautifully rendered, brooding power of the bull, and the pathetic, anguished scribblings of the wounded, dying and dead mothers and children. This contrasts quite strongly with Kirby's New Gods where every panel expresses the same thing: bombastic power. "Imagination" has never been so boring!

To be fair, what I saw wasn't even really drawn by Kirby if you consider this: Kirby "pencilled" it and another guy "inked" it. So what you get in the comic book is some other guy's tracings of Kirby's drawings. To me this is just more evidence that the whole enterprise is artistically bankrupt.

Also, a supposedly big innovation of Kirby's from this early 70's period is his use of collage. Well, about 50 or 60 years earlier, Picasso (and his sidekick, Braque), did something much more astounding. They **invented** collage.

The sad thing is cartoonists tend to begin as comics fans, and as **fans** are almost invariably influenced only by other cartoonists. Kirby's influence on the mass of them is heavy. If more cartoonists looked to Picasso they'd be in a much better position to unlock the expressive potential of comics. So march down to your local library and find a book that reprints Picasso's Dream and Lie of Franco. Jack Kirby is not to comics what Picasso is to painting, but Picasso is to comics what **Picasso** is to painting.

ORION EXPERIENCES A FIERCE EXULTATION AS HIS STRENGTH AND AGILITY SCORE AGAINST HIS ENEMIES!!
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, YOU SAVAGE DOG!! AAAAA—
ENJOY THE RIDE, GOLE!
NOW— GET OFF THIS SHIP!! YOU'RE FOULING THE DECK!!
THEY STRUCK THE SEA HARD, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE--- HAULING THEM IN!!
BROTHER PYRON-- IN THAT FLAME-THROWING MANTA-SLED OF HIS, NO DOUBT!! WE'LL CATCH IT NOW!!
HE'LL BURN US OUT, RATHER THAN FIGHT AT CLOSE QUARTERS! THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT!!!
LIGHTRAY! LIGHTRAY! WHERE ARE YOU!!! WE'VE GOT TO MAKE OUR MOVE.OR--DIE!!
22

Jack Kirby's art from New God's #6

Pablo Picasso's the Dream and Lie of Franco. 1937

IT

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CHRIS WARE

MAX CANNON

MIKE MACROPOULOS

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COMIC BOOK REVIEWS

It's been almost five months since I've written any comic reviews, so I was sure there was going to be a ton of great stuff to write about, but when I finally took a look at the small stack of new comics I've bought, I was really disappointed to see how few good comics have come out recently. There are hardly even any comics worth talking about.

The best of the bunch (by a long shot) is Seth's **Palookaville #5**. The restraint and charm of his storytelling is amazing, and the art is wonderful to look at. This is only the second part of a six issue long story about not only his search for comics and information of an old cartoonist, Kalo, but also the story of his relationship to the world around him, to his friend Chester, to his cat, and to his new girlfriend. I'm looking forward to the next issue more than anything else.

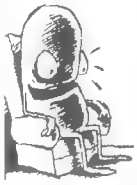
Eightball #13 was the strongest 8-Ball in a long time, mostly because of the first story, "Blue Italian Shit," which may well be my favorite Dan Clowes story yet. The next issue should be out before you read this, so pick it up.

The new comic size **American Splendor** special was the most entertaining Harvey Pekar story I've read in a long time. It focuses on Harvey and his wife Joyce's trip to New York to appear on the David Letterman show...with Harvey ending up dumped from the show when Barry Manilow goes on too long. The art is competent, but boringly handled by Joe Zabel and Gary Dumm.

Well, my cousin Nathan tells me the Science Fiction Channel is now showing Buck Rogers, Manimal and Automan!
THAT'S IT! I'M SICK of THIS SHIT! When the HELL are WE gonna get the Sci-Fi CHANNEL ALREADY?! SHIT!
BEE-DEE BEE-DEE BEE DEE! Holy foul mouth, Batman!

The first of a new four issue comedy series from Dark Horse called **Instant Piano** is out. It features all new comics by Kyle Baker, Mark Badger, Robbie Busch, Stephen Destefano, and Evan Dorkin. The highlight of the first issue is Evan Dorkin's funniest story to date, the lovingly done parody of "The Eltingville Comic-Book-Science-Fiction-Fantasy-Horror and Role-Playing Club," and nerds everywhere. It's side splitting, laugh-inducing, that even people I work with liked. I also really liked Kyle Baker's autobio parody "This." Everything else, by the other guys involved, seemed pretty forgettable and boring to me (but I don't remember any of them).

Acme Novelty Library 1-3 has been really nice to look at and I've thought all the text pieces have been hilarious. Most of the actual comics inside don't do much for me...maybe I'm too stupid to get them. Anyway, it's an interesting book, at least for it's truimph of production values.



I don't have much more to say about **Pickle** that I haven't said before, except to remind you to read it. Issue #5 should be out by now, and I can't wait to read it. Dylan Horrocks is one of the true geniuses of comic books.

True Swamp #3 is another fine issue of this unique new series by Jon Lewis. Yeah, it has talking animals and stuff, but generally they're talking about stuff that's more important than what most comics about people talk about. True Swamp is very far from being cute, and it's really very good. Highly Recommended.

I thought the first issue of Chester Brown's new series **Underwater** was really stupid and not the best way for me to have used three dollars. The art's nice, but there's practically no story. What little dialog there is, is in complete gibberish too. I understand this is the first issue of a twenty issue story, but it was a damn disappointing start. It failed to grab me in the least.

I actually bought the new issue of **Love and Rockets** (#45), to give the series a second chance. I really loved Jaime Hernandez's story "We Want the World and We Want it Bald..." I think it's one of the better stories I've ever read by him. The rest of the issue bored me completely, especially Gilbert's story, "Bread, Love and Marla," which I only finished reading by a herculean effort, as it made no sense to me.

Colin Upton's latest **Big Thing** (an Aeon one-shot) was pretty good, especially the four semi-autobiographical stories that make up the bulk of the book.

White Like She was a four issue series (that just ended) by Bob Fingerman, that I rather enjoyed. Fingerman used a SF/genre setting of mad brain transplanting scientists to talk about modern topics like race and gender politics, as well as dysfunctional family relationships. The art is unique, and while it grated a bit on me at first, I ended up liking it, and think it went very well with the story. It was certainly better than anything else I'd seen by Fingerman before.

Finally there's **Wildlife #2**...more autobiographical comics by Peter Kuper, that I liked a lot and highly recommend.

...and please don't forget Paul Auster's City of Glass, one of the best graphic novels ever, with art by David Mazzucchelli (published by Avon).

mini-comic reviews

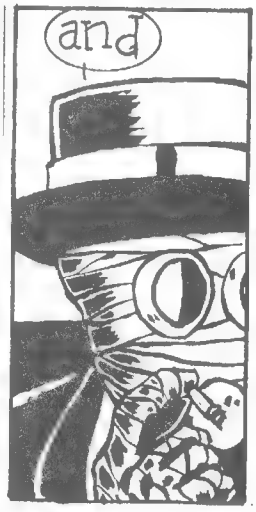
Terminology is a weird thing, so let me explain what I mean by mini-comic reviews and why they're separate from the other comics I've reviewed in here. First of all, mini-comics can be any size and length. To me, the name mini-comic means a comic that somebody has put together themselves, and that the easiest way to get them is to send money directly to that person. Most of the other comics I reviewed in here you should hopefully find in your regular comic book store, but unfortunately you probably won't be able to find most of these mini-comics at that same store. That doesn't make them any worse or any better, it's just that usually people who make mini-comics don't sell them through the direct distribution distributors (which is how most stores get their comics). Most of the mini-comics I'm reviewing here are better than the "real" comics that you can find in that store. Yes, it's true that there are tons of shitty mini-comics out there...same as there's also tons of shitty "real" comics (mainstream & alternative). The thing is, I'm only reviewing the mini-comics I think have merit, and are probably worth your money. Please at least give a few a try, and please send cash. It's easy.

TERRIFYING STEAMBOAT #3 by Matt Madden

It seems like more than just ten days since he left his office to get some coffee, sat in his car instead, and started to drive.

This is short and great. "Off The Road" is a wonderful and unique story about a guy who leaves his office to get some coffee, and instead gets in his car and just starts driving across the country. Beautifully drawn, and with one of the best endings ever. I didn't like the five page dream story as much, but the deconstructionist back page "Real Time Comix" was a real charmer. Send $2.25 to Matt Madden at P.O. Box 49267, Austin, TX 78765

HORSE 1-5 by Dylan Williams



I'm reviewing all 5 issues of this together because they all came out one month apart, and they're all really good, so you should order all five. Of course, each issue can be read alone, but it's really all part of one ongoing (only backwards) story, arguably about a mysterious talisman, and the bad things that happen to everyone involved with it. In issue one, these bandage guys flay an antique dealer, and the guy in the hat and the blonde kill a lady while robbing a payroll, and then have dinner in France. In issue two the bandage guys kill the hat guy and the blonde after an interrogation. In issue three (my favorite), the bandage guys interrogate a guy in a diner, and then kill everybody! Issue four is mostly text with few pictures, and is about a guy who buys the talisman at an antique store and finds creativity and inspiration from it. Issue five is the story of the blonde (I think). Horse is offbeat, surreal and always interesting. Dylan is a unique storyteller and a great artist, so order this already. Issues one and two are $1.50 each, three, four and five are $2.00 each. Order from Puppy Toss at P.O. Box 9849, Berkeley, CA 94709.

FUNKAPOTAMUS #7 by Jerome

This ones worth it just for the one page comic "My 1st & Worst Punk-Rock Show (1986)," which is one of my favorite comics of the year. Also the story "Desperate for Nothing in Particular for No Particular Reason" is damn good. Jerome has a simple and appealing drawing style (more than a little reminiscent of John Porcellino), and makes a good comic. For a copy send $1.00 to Jerome at 4966 Deepwood Ct., St. Louis, MO 63128.

SKIM LIZARD #6

It's been a while since the last issue, but the Skim Lizard anthology is back, with one of its strongest issues yet...mostly due to Pond, Reed, and Swans's (the folks behind Spin=0 and When My Brother Was God) three great "Planet X" strips. I also really liked Maxim and Capelli's "Leaving Forever." Oh yeah, there's a good comic by Chantale Doyle too, but maybe you already saw it in her own comic, Misery and Vomit. There's also a couple of other strips that I didn't like much, but it's an anthology, so what did you expect? For a copy send $1.50 to Puppy Toss at P.O. Box 9849, Berkeley, CA 94709.

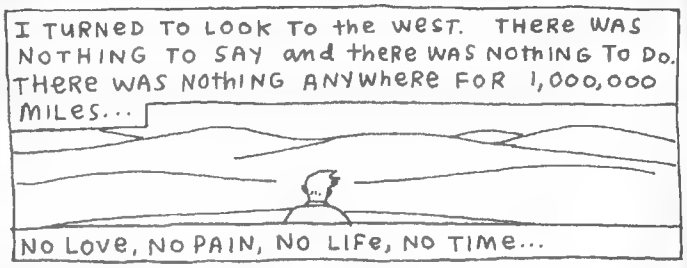
THE MAGIC WHISTLE #5 by Sam Henderson

Sam Henderson is always funny, and Magic Whistle #5 doesn't disappoint. I mean, this shit is laugh out loud funny. It's great, okay. Send $2.00 to Sam at 14 Bayard St. #3, Brooklyn, NY 11211.

OPTIC NERVE #7
by Adrian Tomine

This is the slickest looking Optic Nerve yet, but unfortunately it's also the most boring. Stories about a stagnant relationship, a girl who grinds her teeth, an autobio piece about how Adrian wishes he didn't have to sleep, plus a few shorter comics. Most of the comics in here seemed like tiny fragments of stories, and none of them grabbed my attention. I liked the new simple cartoony art on a couple of the stories, but the more realistically rendered stories seemed more stiffly drawn than they used to be, and with an awfully big Dan Clowes influence. Anyway, this is the last mini-comic issue as Adrian takes Optic Nerve to Drawn & Quarterly this March. It'll be interesting to see if this is just a one issue slump or if Adrian used himself up after making the first six issues. For a copy, send $2.00 to P.O. Box 4025, Berkeley, CA 94704

KING-CAT #45


I TURNED TO LOOK TO the WEST. THERE WAS NOTHING TO SAY and there WAS NOTHING TO Do. THERE WAS NOTHING ANYWHERE FOR 1,000,000 MILES...
NO LOVE, NO PAIN, NO LIFE, NO TIME...

Yet another wonderful and magical issue of John Porcellino's King-Cat comics. Actually, this is the best one in quite a while, with John being joined by Joe (Silly Daddy) Chips, Jason (Rice & Beans) Heller, and Jerome (Funkapotamus) Gaynor for an extra special 32 page King-Cat about the weekend of September 8-13, 1993, that they all spent together in Denver. Each artist writes and draws his own part of the story of the events of the weekend. Especially great are Joe C.'s one page story about a stop in the middle of nowhere in Kansas to look at the stars, and John's beautiful story of when they all go mountain climbing. You just gotta admire the hell out of John Porcellino for putting 45 issues of this comic out...a truly amazing feat, that I doubt anybody else in mini-comics has, or probably ever will accomplish. And they're all so good, too! Send $1.00 to Spit and a Half at P.O. Box 18510, Denver, CO, 80218

WHEN MY BROTHER WAS GOD #1, 3, and 4... Story by Jenna Reed and Lucien Pond, art by S.W. Rhee

This summer, the folks behind this interesting comic reprinted new editions of the first two issues (there is no #2), and now they've just released an all new 4th issue. Some people I know put this down for being too art-school dress-in-black, pretentious, but I tend to think it's actually pretty good. Unique layouts, sharp looking original art, and a unique way of telling a story make this one of the more accomplished mini's out there. The story centers around a group of art college girls all hanging out and mostly talking/arguing about the things they call their lives. Each issue is around 40 pages long, which makes it worth it for you to send $3.00 an issue to Hangnail Press at 3907 Piedmont Ave. Box 10, Oakland, CA 94611.

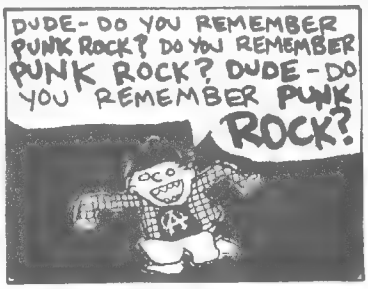
DEEP GIRL #4
by Ariel Bordeaux

Ariel continues to improve with this, the 4th issue of Deep Girl. The main, and best story here is "Girl-Watching Girl," which is about her anxieties and feelings when she looks at skinny women, her own self image, and a lot of other stuff, all thrown in together in a pretty interesting story. She delivers her best art yet, on the freaky story "Girl-friends" that almost seems to be missing an ending. It's about a day she spends with a friend, and just plain looks great. There's also a few smaller comics that are kind of fun. Send $2.00 to 573 Scott St. Apt. L, San Francisco, CA 94117

SOUL TWINKIES #7
by Bobby Madness

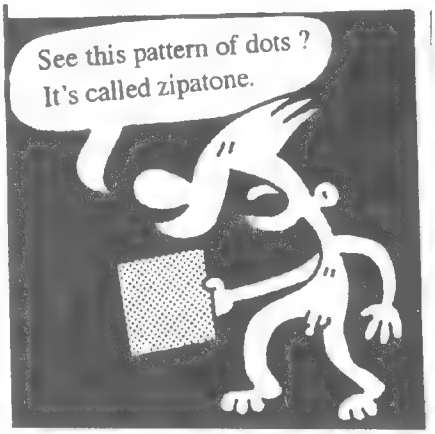
Bobby Madness makes really funny, fantastically drawn, punk comics that I really like. This issue starts with a great parody of Dan Clowes designed OK Soda. "Why Am I Stuck in This World Today" is yet another great day in the life of homeless punk Tom Teenager story. There's a few pages of graffiti art and more wacky stuff, and a hilarious top ten list type page with such lists as "5 Reasons To Kill A Hippy" and "Top 5 Unused Rap Names"...the #1 of which is "M.C. Sexist Fuck-Face." It doesn't get much better than this kids. Send $3.00 (and an age statement) to Wow Cool at 48 Shattuck Sq. #149, Berkeley, CA 94704

HUTCH OWEN'S WORKING HARD by Tom Hart



What a fucking great comic! I just finished re-reading Hutch Owen's, and it almost made me glad to be alive. It's the story of street pole dissident, Hutch Owen, and his struggle to live life his own way, plus a smart and curious kid who is building a fort, and Dennis Worner...corporate megalomaniac out of control. This book holds lots of little secrets and truths about life in it's magic pages. It's pretty rare to read a comic that you can actually learn something from, but you just might by reading this. At the least, maybe it will help clear your head a bit. My only complaint might be that the super simple and somewhat sloppy art was kinda boring. 60 pages long with a really nicely printed color cover. Send $4.00 to Tom Hart at P.O. Box 95973, Seattle WA, 98145-2973.

JAMES KOCHALKA SUPER-STAR #5 by James Kochalka



This guy's been bit bad by the comic book bug. It seems like everytime I turn around there's another one of these in my mailbox, and it makes me kinda happy, 'cause I like them. I wish there was a little more to this issue though. $2.00 for 15 pages of comics seems a little pricey. Anyway, it's a pretty good issue, with a weird story "Konk My Konk" about truth, drawing comics, and the time as a youth he threw a rock at a friends head and thought he might have killed him. A story about why he started using zipatone was kind of wacky. The one really annoying thing about this comic though, is its annoying letters column, full of comments from other cartoonists (like Jeff Johnson, Glenn Head, Jerome, Tom Hart, Ed Brubaker, K. Thor Jenson, and Ariel Bordeaux) about his work...it's just plain ridiculous. Send $2.00 to James at P.O. Box 8321, Burlington, VT 05402

THE CATBOX ROOM #2 by Lisa Maslowe

I really enjoyed this comic. Great, funny stories about Lisa's life, very uniquely told. The two stories in here about her cats, Clarence and Rufus, and how her comic got its name, are what I liked best. There's also a great story about her youthful fascination with ants, and a long story about her feelings about credit cards and some of the people who use them at the record store she works at. Lisa's artwork has improved considerably since the enjoyable first issue of the Catbox Room, over a year ago, and is full of charm and humor. 40 pages, and for only $2.00 to Lisa at P.O. Box 170143, San Francisco, CA 94117.

SILLY DADDY: The Long Goodbye by Joe Chiappetta

This incredible 100 page book collects the first seven issues of Silly Daddy in their entirety and it's one of the most incredible reads ever! I mean, Silly Daddy is just really fucking great, and if you haven't read it before, here's your big chance. Silly Daddy is really unique stories about well, being a dad. I can't really think of any other comics from this perspective, and it's a really good change from the usual 20-something "slacker" comics most everybody else seems to be doing. All seven issues fit together to make one big magical story about Joe's relationship to his daughter, and the failure of his marriage. This is a really touching, and just plain cool book, that you should definitely check out. Send a $7.95 check made out to Joe Chiapetta, 2209 Northgate, N. Riverside, IL 60546

AGAIN WITH THE COMICS

SOMETIMES I THINK I'M THE MOST PATHETIC PERSON TO WALK THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

I MEAN, MY WHOLE LIFE IS COMICS!

NOT ONLY DO I MAKE MY OWN MAGAZINE ABOUT COMICS...

DESTROY ALL COMICS

ISSUE ONE $3.50

NOT ONLY DO I DRAW COMICS...

BUT I ALSO WORK IN A COMIC BOOK STORE.

CAGE

FOR ENTERTAINMENT, IN MY FREE TIME, I READ COMICS.

SOMETIMES I EVEN DREAM ABOUT COMICS!

HELP! WILL SOMEBODY OUT THERE PLEASE SHOOT ME?

END. J.L. 10.94

BURN BABY BURN
©1994 BY JAMES KOCHALKA
I WAS KINDA IN BETWEEN SLEEPING AND WAKING UP
I WAS SURE MY GIRL-FRIEND WAS TRYING TO SET ME ON FIRE
skRitch
NO NO! Don't burn me
?
I'm afraid to wake up

RADIOOOOOO
©1994
BY JAMES KOCHALKA
I DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD, OR EVEN SPIRITUALITY OF ANY KIND. I LIKE SCIENCE
E=mc²
BUT THERE'S SOME THINGS THAT SCIENCE CAN'T EXPLAIN
SHAKE
?
...LIKE HOW THE HELL DO RADIOS WORK?!?
I THINK GHOSTS FLY BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE RADIOS, CARRYING MESSAGES
IT'S KIND OF SCARY

I'M LIKE YOU
BY DYLAN WILLIAMS
MAN, SHE'S CUTE. WHAT A SET OF TITS
I'LL NEVER MEET SOMEONE LIKE THAT. BESIDES, SHE'S PROBABLY A TOTAL BITCH.
YEAH, SHE LOOKED LIKE A SORRORITY GIRL ANYWAY... FUCKIN' STUPID CHICKS.
SHE KINDA LOOKED LIKE ANDREA... SHE'S GONNA KEEP POPPIN' UP IN MY LIFE.
IT'S LIKE I CAN'T EVER FUCKIN LEAVE HER.
..SHIT...
I'M SO GLAD I'M AN ARTIST...
I SHOULD GO BACK TO THOSE LIFE DRAWING CLASSES.
OH, CHOCO
30

WOW! SHE IS SO FINE!

SHIT...

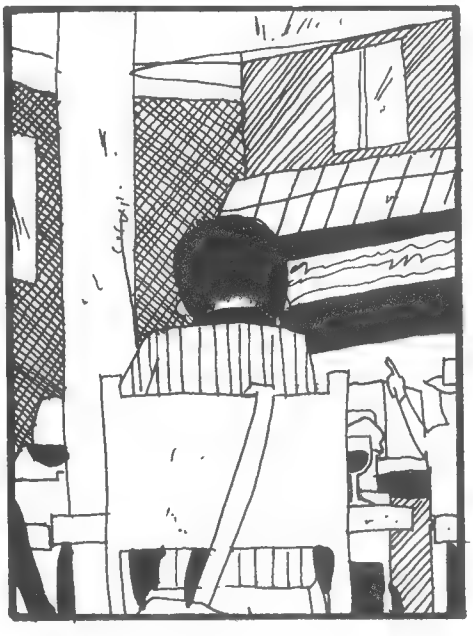
.....
A LATTE?

SHIT... I WONDER IF SHE'D GO OUT WITH ME.

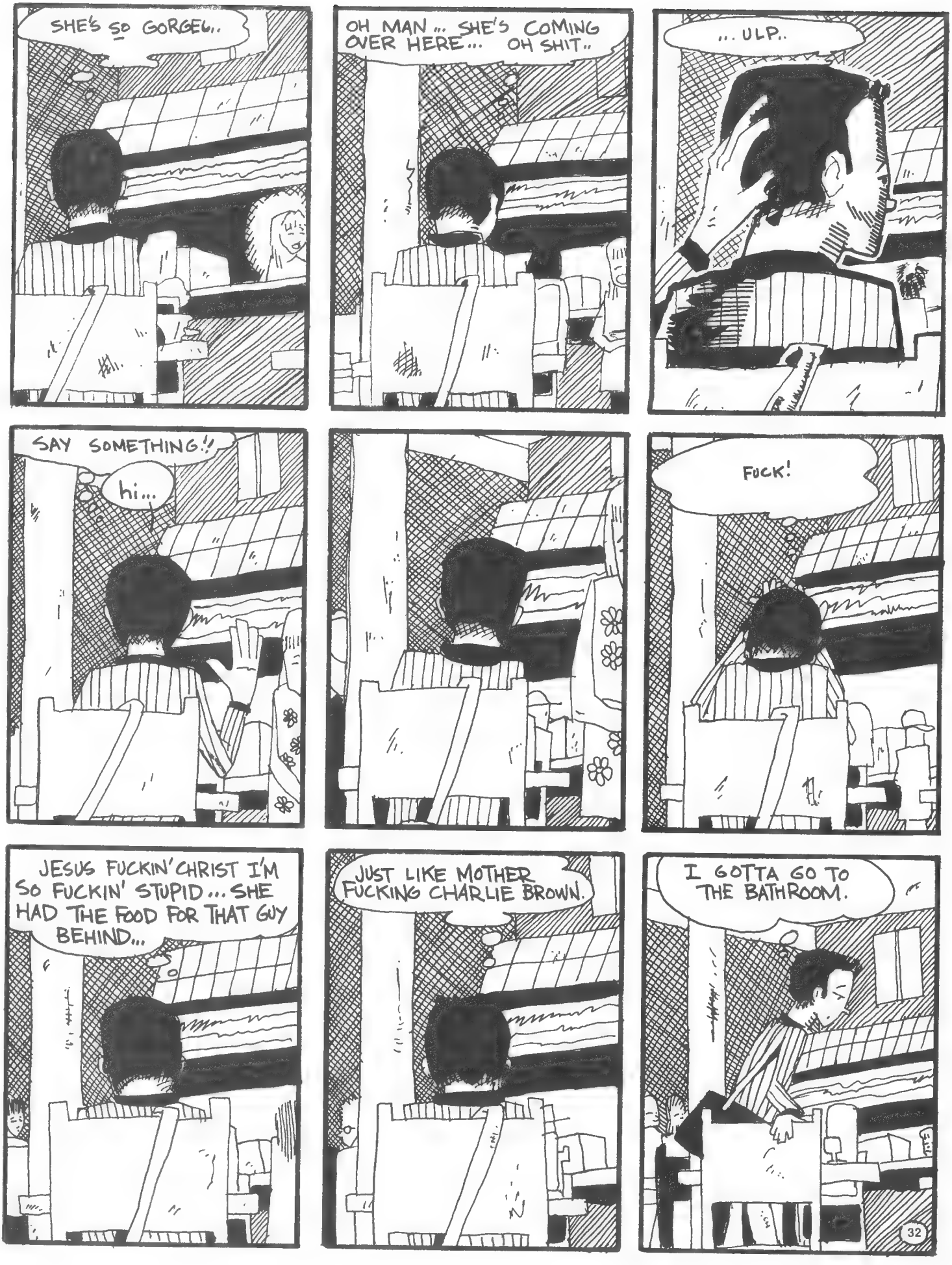
"IT'S DISGRACEFUL THE WAY YOU HANG AROUND ALL DAY DOING NOTHING!!

"NOW YOU GET OUT THERE, AND CHASE SOME RABBITS!"

"ARF ARF ARF"

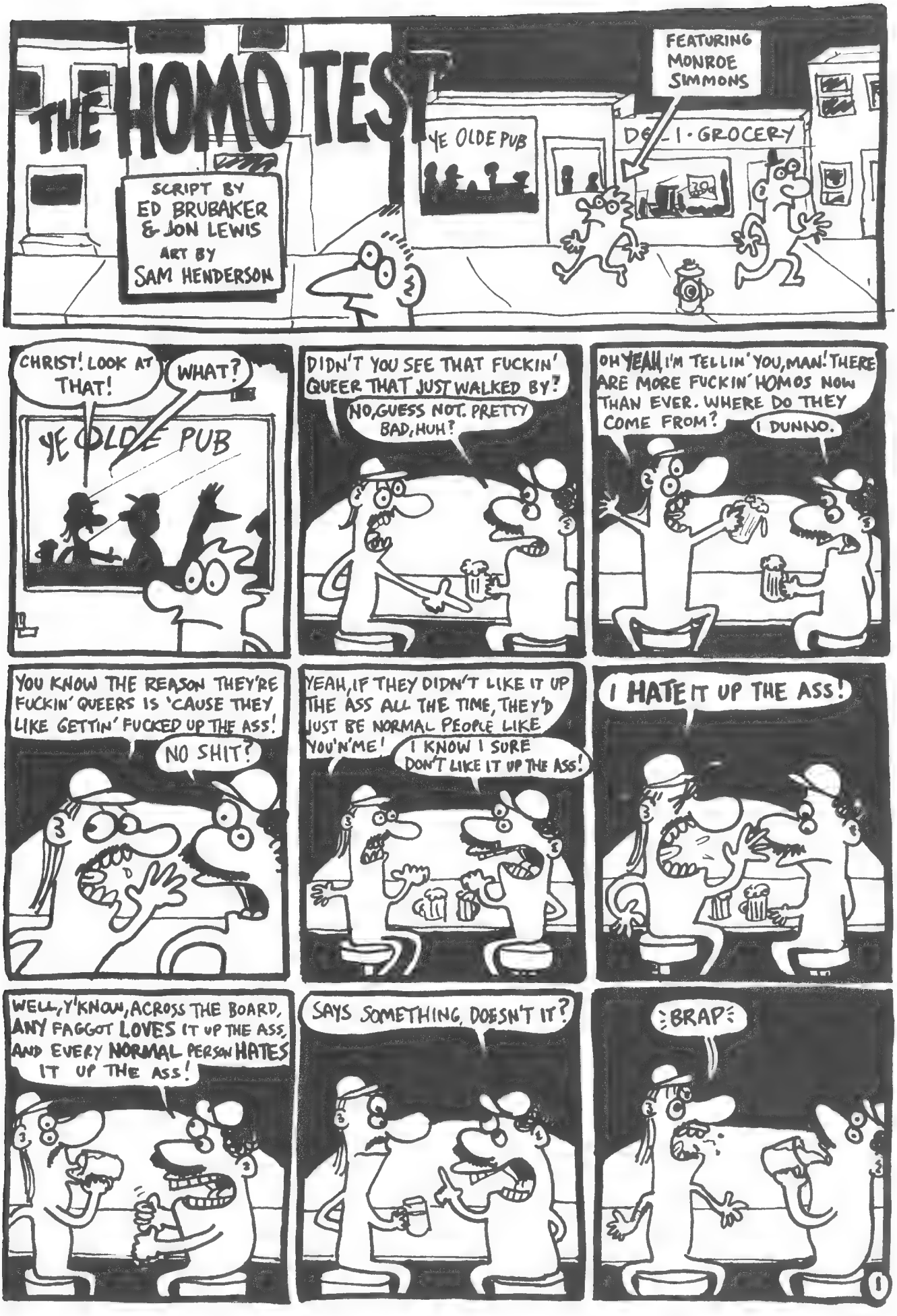


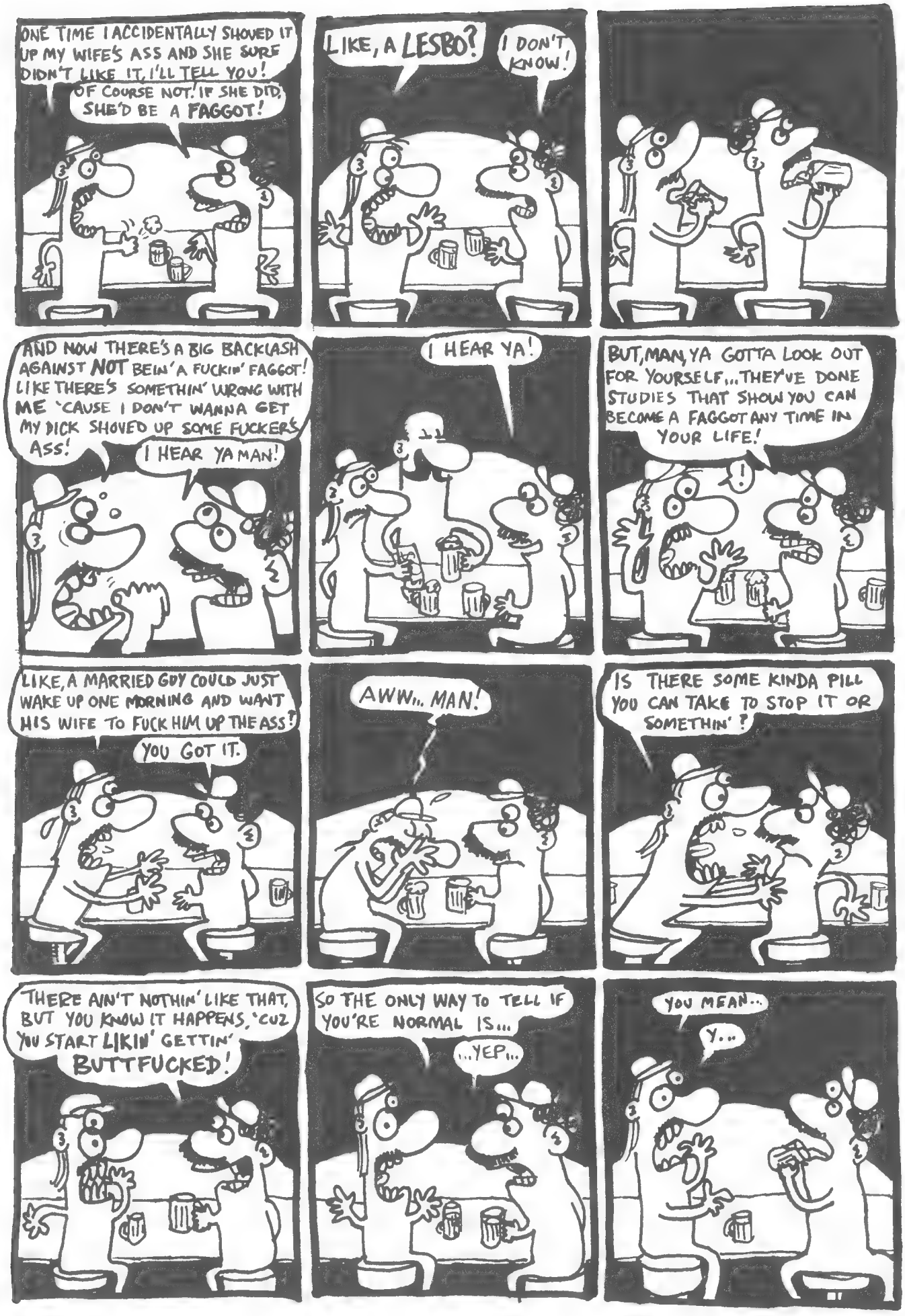
"YOU'RE NOT FOOLING ANYBODY BUT YOURSELF!"
HEH!

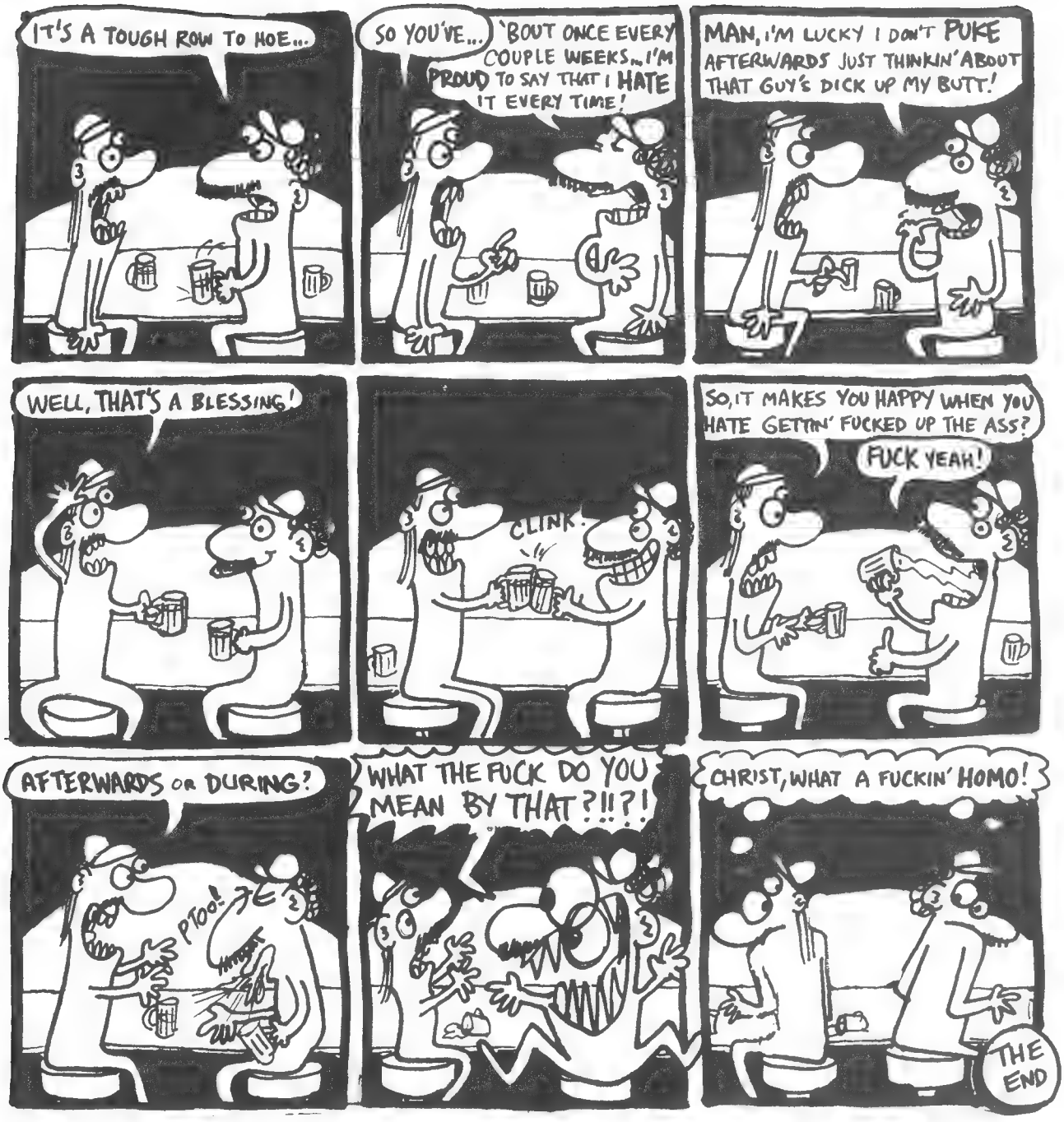

SHE'S SO GORGEO..
OH MAN ... SHE'S COMING OVER HERE... OH SHIT..
... ULP..
SAY SOMETHING!!
hi...
FUCK!
JESUS FUCKIN' CHRIST I'M SO FUCKIN' STUPID... SHE HAD THE FOOD FOR THAT GUY BEHIND...
JUST LIKE MOTHER FUCKING CHARLIE BROWN.
I GOTTA GO TO THE BATHROOM.

GENTS
UHH...
SIGH....
I'D PROBLY HATE HER ANYWAY...
THE EVER LOVIN' END

WAP WAP WAP WAP
WAP WAP WAP WAP
WAP WAP WAP WAP
ERCON
ARE YA GONNA PUT ME IN YER STRIP, NOW?!!
HUH?!! HUH?!!
FOLKS HAVE BEEN TREATING ME A LOT DIFFERENTLY NOW THAT I DO AN "AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL" COMIC STRIP...
THE K CHRONICLES
WRITE!! P.O. BOX 591794 S.F. CA. 94159-1794
IT HAS ESPECIALLY AFFECTED MY WAY WITH WOMEN...
Keith.. we have to talk...
Don't sit sideways on me, babe.. you know I can't see you when you sit sideways..
I HAD BEEN DATING THIS SUPERMODEL RECENTLY..
I don't want to go out with you anymore..
WHAT?!
WHY?!
©KARL KEITH KNIGHT
Well.. from reading your comic strip, I thought it would be kind of exciting going out with you...
...But in reality, you're as BORING AS HELL... I get sleepy JUST LOOKING at you...
CAFE AU
..It's like you live vicariously through your comic strip... creating a life you only wish you could have.. A life of fun, sex, & excitement..
=sniff= aw jeez, Kate... don't leave me...
You can draw and say anything you want about yourself and your readers will take it as the TRUTH.. Heck.. you're practically playing GOD!!
THE END
=SIGH= BUT YOU ARE really good in bed...
STOP


THE HOMO TEST
SCRIPT BY ED BRUBAKER & JON LEWIS
ART BY SAM HENDERSON
FEATURING MONROE SIMMONS
YE OLDE PUB
DELI · GROCERY
CHRIST! LOOK AT THAT!
WHAT?
YE OLDE PUB
DIDN'T YOU SEE THAT FUCKIN' QUEER THAT JUST WALKED BY?
NO, GUESS NOT. PRETTY BAD, HUH?
OH YEAH, I'M TELLIN' YOU, MAN! THERE ARE MORE FUCKIN' HOMOS NOW THAN EVER. WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?
I DUNNO.
YOU KNOW THE REASON THEY'RE FUCKIN' QUEERS IS 'CAUSE THEY LIKE GETTIN' FUCKED UP THE ASS!
NO SHIT?
YEAH, IF THEY DIDN'T LIKE IT UP THE ASS ALL THE TIME, THEY'D JUST BE NORMAL PEOPLE LIKE YOU'N'ME!
I KNOW I SURE DON'T LIKE IT UP THE ASS!
I HATE IT UP THE ASS!
WELL, Y'KNOW, ACROSS THE BOARD, ANY FAGGOT LOVES IT UP THE ASS, AND EVERY NORMAL PERSON HATES IT UP THE ASS!
SAYS SOMETHING, DOESN'T IT?
:BRAP:


ONE TIME I ACCIDENTALLY SHOVED IT UP MY WIFE'S ASS AND SHE SURE DIDN'T LIKE IT, I'LL TELL YOU!
OF COURSE NOT! IF SHE DID, SHE'D BE A FAGGOT!
LIKE, A LESBO?
I DON'T KNOW!
AND NOW THERE'S A BIG BACKLASH AGAINST NOT BEIN' A FUCKIN' FAGGOT! LIKE THERE'S SOMETHIN' WRONG WITH ME 'CAUSE I DON'T WANNA GET MY DICK SHOVED UP SOME FUCKER'S ASS!
I HEAR YA MAN!
I HEAR YA!
BUT, MAN, YA GOTTA LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF... THEY'VE DONE STUDIES THAT SHOW YOU CAN BECOME A FAGGOT ANY TIME IN YOUR LIFE!
LIKE, A MARRIED GUY COULD JUST WAKE UP ONE MORNING AND WANT HIS WIFE TO FUCK HIM UP THE ASS?
YOU GOT IT.
AWW... MAN!
IS THERE SOME KINDA PILL YOU CAN TAKE TO STOP IT OR SOMETHIN'?
THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' LIKE THAT, BUT YOU KNOW IT HAPPENS, 'CUZ YOU START LIKIN' GETTIN' BUTTFUCKED!
SO THE ONLY WAY TO TELL IF YOU'RE NORMAL IS...
...YEP...
YOU MEAN...
Y...


IT'S A TOUGH ROW TO HOE...
SO YOU'VE... 'BOUT ONCE EVERY COUPLE WEEKS... I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT I HATE IT EVERY TIME!
MAN, I'M LUCKY I DON'T PUKE AFTERWARDS JUST THINKIN' ABOUT THAT GUY'S DICK UP MY BUTT!
WELL, THAT'S A BLESSING!
CLINK.
SO, IT MAKES YOU HAPPY WHEN YOU HATE GETTIN' FUCKED UP THE ASS?
FUCK YEAH!
AFTERWARDS OR DURING?
PTOO!
WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?!!?!
CHRIST, WHAT A FUCKIN' HOMO!
THE END

COMING IN FEBRUARY 1995

DESTROY ALL COMICS #2

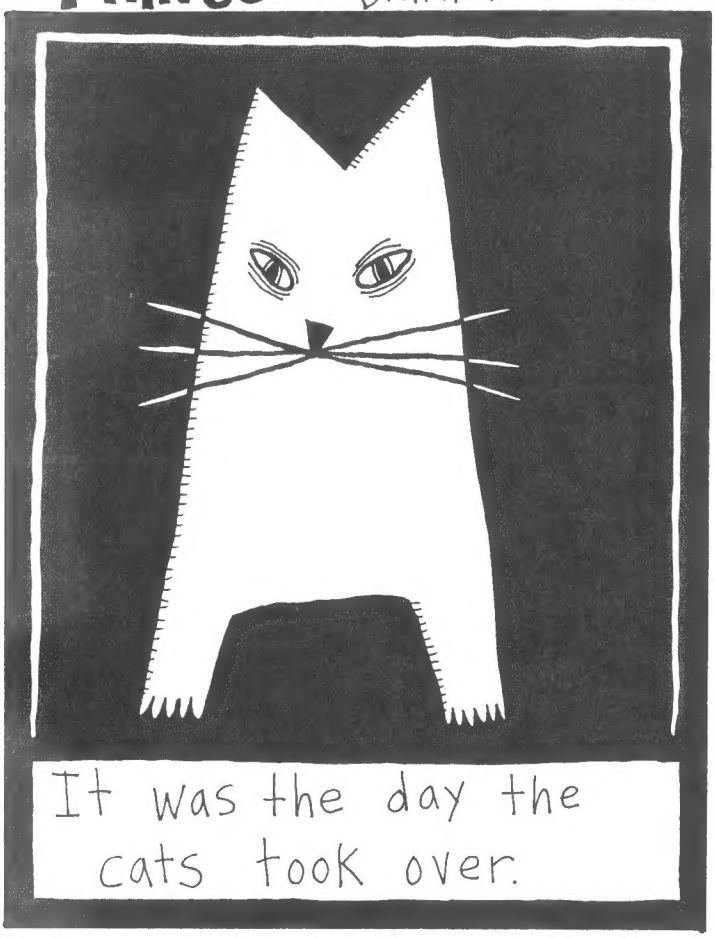
featuring an interview with Seth

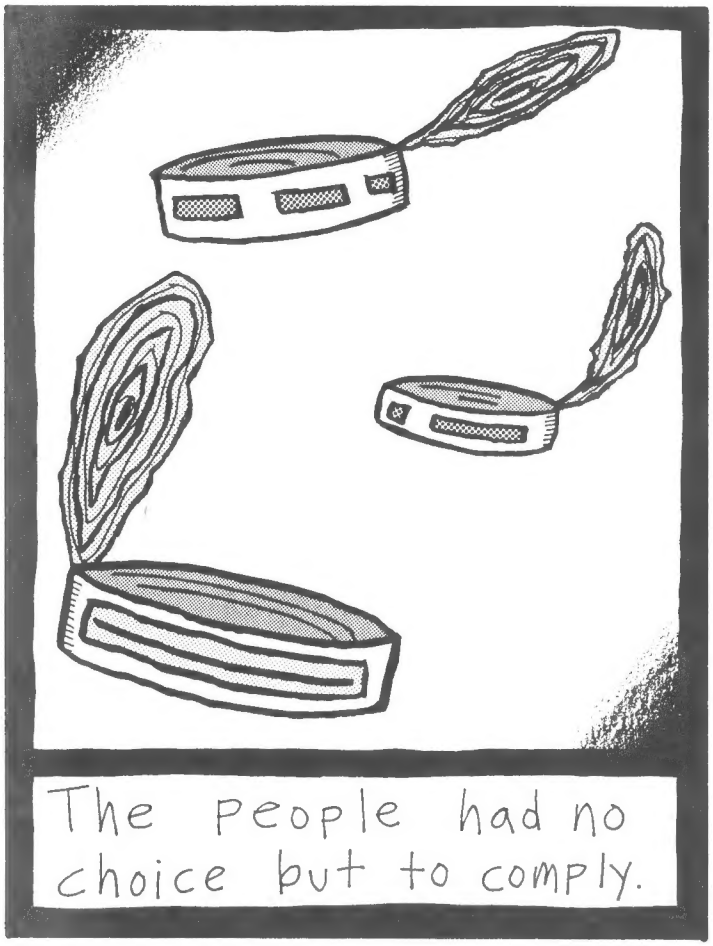
DESTROY ALL COMICS
FEATURING:
an interview with SETH
reviews of comic books and mini-comics
new comics by Jeff LeVine and more
GOD BLESS EACH AND EVERYONE OF YOU WHO BUYS THIS MAGAZINE
ISSUE TWO
$3.50 U.S.
$4.95 CAN.

GOOD MORNING

I LOVE YOU THE MOST
TO SAY THE LEAST
WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW
WHAT ARE YOU WRITING?
A STORY
A LOVE STORY?
NO...
NOT YET
ERIC SEARLEMAN '94

THINGS by BRIAN MARSLAND





Brian Marsland ©1993

LETTERS

write to Destroy All Comics C/O Jeff LeVine 1574 Hayes St., San Francisco, CA 94117

(This is a small selection of letters I received from the last digest-size issue of DAC.)

Jeff, I was suprised to hear you decided to get distributed by Slave Labor, especially since that totally, utterly, completely contradicts every single word of the intro to issue 4.

As for issue six, it was my favorite D.A.C. yet. The more mini-comic reviews the better. The Puppy Toss interview was informative; most of your interviews in the past have bored me, but this one kept me interested. Jeff LeVine: On Comics was a beautiful article; just when you had me convinced you were a bitter, uncaring negative jerk you write a touching article displaying to the world that you do indeed have hopes and dreams. You've made a lot of enemies with your 'zine, but it's articles like that that can unite the Underground Comics community in our struggle for respect and economic stability. It was entertaining to see how many people you pissed off in the letters column this issue. Please keep pissing people off; that was one of the coolest letter columns I've ever read - people's pissed off letters and your unrelenting replies make for good comedy.

Bye, Kyle Rimkus Frankfort, IL

Dear Jeff, Just got the new DAC. The first thing I read was your article "On Comics."

The next time that you think that maybe you should give it up and get a real job laying bricks or answering phones, do yourself a favor and forget it.

I've written you before, sent you some of my first attempts at cartooning, and you've been very cool to write me back. All I've talked about is comics, so let me tell you a little bit about myself.

I'm 32, I have a job, I've been promoted twice, and each time I've ended up hating it! The company is pretty good to me, I get insurance, but I've stepped down from two promotions. I have security, been there five years, but I'm miserable with it.

I'm also stuck with it, trying to pay my bills, pay rent, buy food, blah blah blah! Sure I could get another job, maybe get paid more, maybe better benifits, but I doubt I'd be that much happier.

Believe me Jeff, you don't want to go this route.

You're in your twenties (that means you're brimming with a lot more energy). You have your own professionally published comic, (and your comic isn't a piece of shit) you've managed to produce a zine that attracts praise from other professional cartoonists, and now it's going to be published by Slave Labor; you're going to have creative control of a professionally produced comic industry magazine...and you're still in your twenties.

You shouldn't feel good about this; you should feel great!! (and I'm sure there are times when you do.)

Don't let yourself get depressed, don't think you should just give it up and get a real job!

Be happy man! Because you are doing what you want and you have your whole future ahead of you.

Anyways, what I'm saying is don't lose heart. You've managed to do a lot in a short time. Feel proud once in a while (but don't get too cocky).

Peace man, Tim

Sure, I'm happy I have my own comic and magazine, but it's not as great as you might think, and it's a hell of a lot of work. I'm not making a living at this...I have a real job that pays my bills too, but I don't have insurance or anything like that. It's really not as big a deal as you think, having a comic. It's all just a matter of a lot of work.

Jeff: Destroy All Comics is very necessary. You must continue to publish it. One thing that bugs me is that you're taking it to Slave Labor. They're cool and all, but the main problem with the Comics Journal (possibly one of the very few problems) is that it's put out by Fantagraphics. I'm sure they try to be objective about it all, but it's still sort of a conflict of interests when the major alternative comix publisher also publishes the leading alternative comix review magazine. Don't get me wrong. TCJ is very neccesary also. I'd shit if it died.

I guess so long as you remain objective DAC will keep it's edge. At least you're not also the publisher of Slave Labor. Maybe if you can concentrate on mini-comix exclusively you could find a different niche and stay away from any conflicts of interest. I still wish you could keep it going on your own, but I don't blame you for taking it big-time. Good luck. I know I'm going to buy it.

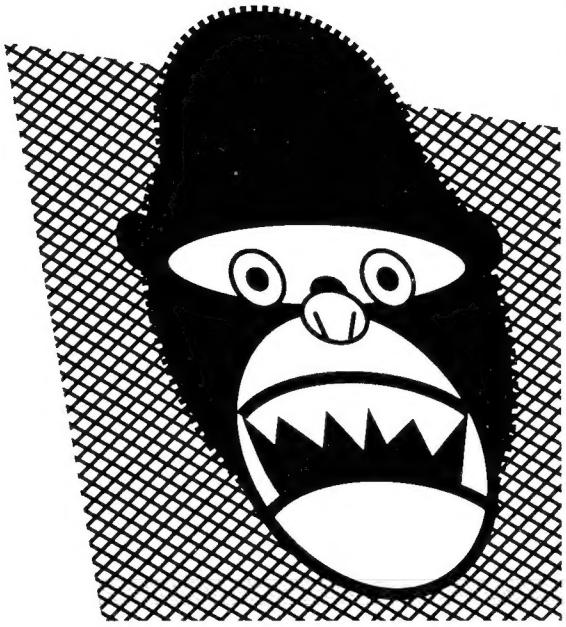
Yours Suicidally - Chuck B. Irvine, CA

So you're bugged that Slave Labor is publishing this magazine, well fuck you Chuck. Who cares who is publishing what...it's what the content is that's important. All reviews are opinions...objectivity is bullshit. This isn't the news...this is what I think about comics. I'm sure that it's the same over at the Comics Journal. Quit complaining and make your own completely objective magazine (but I'm sure it will be boring). Later.

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY WAS SAFE

A.P.E. II

A one day exhibit of self-publishers, small publishers and alternative cartoonists.



ALTERNATIVE PRESS EXPO

A P E

Confirmed Attendees

DAVE SIM
EVAN DORKIN
SARAH DYER
ROBERTA GREGORY
JEFF LEVINE
SCOTT SAAVEDRA
BATTON LASH
STEVE LAFLER
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